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In the pale's shadow: Indians and British forts in eighteenth-century America

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IN THE PALE'S SHADOW
Indians and British Forts in Eighteenth-Century America

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**A Dissertation presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the College of William and Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

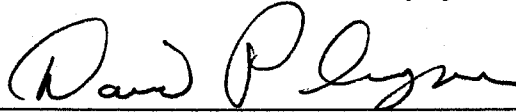
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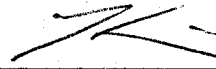
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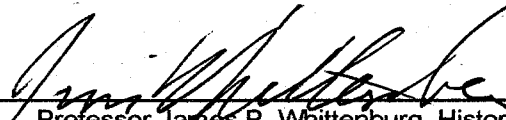


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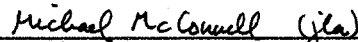
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ABSTRACT PAGE

British forts in the colonial American backcountry have long been subjects of American heroic myth. Forts were romanticized as harbingers of European civilization, and the Indians who visited them as awestruck, childlike, or scheming. Two centuries of historiography did little to challenge the image of Indians as noble but peripheral figures who were swept aside by the juggernaut of European expansion. In the last few decades, historians have attacked the persistent notion that Indians were supporting participants and sought to reposition them as full agents in the early American story. But in their search for Indian agency, historians have given little attention to British forts as exceptional contact points in their own rights. This dissertation examines five such forts and their surrounding regions as places defined by cultural accommodation and confluence, rather than as outposts of European empire. Studying Indian-British interactions near such forts reveals the remarkable extent to which Indians defined the fort experience for both natives and newcomers. Indians visited forts as friends, enemies, and neutrals. They were nearly always present at or near backcountry forts. In many cases, Indians requested forts from their British allies for their own purposes. They used British forts as trading outposts, news centers, community hubs, diplomatic meeting places, and suppliers of gifts. But even with the advantages that could sometimes accrue from the presence of forts, many Indians still resented them. Forts could attract settlers, and often failed to regulate trade and traders sufficiently to please native consumers. Indians did not hesitate to press fort personnel for favors and advantages. In cases where British officers and soldiers failed to impress Indians, or angered them, the results were sometimes violent and extreme. This study makes a start at seeing forts as places that were at least as much a part of the Native American landscape as they were outposts of European aggression. At Forts Loudoun, Allen, Michilimackinac, Niagara, and Chartres, Indians used their abilities and influence to turn the objectives of the British fort system upside down. As centers of British-Indian cultural confluence, these forts evoke an early America marked by a surprising degree of Indian agency. At these contact points people lived for the moment. The America of the future, marked by Indian dispossession and British-American social dominance, was an outcome few could imagine.

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For Stacey

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IN THE PALE'S SHADOW

Indians and British Forts in Eighteenth-Century America

INTRODUCTION

As the confused and timid throng, left the protecting mounds of the fort, and issued on the open plain, the whole scene was, at once, presented to their eyes. At a little distance on the right, and somewhat in the rear, the French army stood to their arms, Montcalm having collected his parties, so soon as his guards had possession of the works. They were attentive, but silent observers of the proceedings of the vanquished, failing in none of the stipulated military honours, and offering no taunt or insult, in their success, to their less fortunate foes. Living masses of the English, to the amount, in the whole, of near three thousand, were moving slowly across the open plain, towards the common center, and gradually approached each other, as they converged to the point of their march, a vista cut through the lofty trees, where the road to the Hudson entered the forest. Along the sweeping borders of the woods, hung a dark cloud of savages, eyeing the passage of their enemies, and hovering, at a distance, like vultures, who were only kept from swooping on their prey, by the presence and restraint of a superior army. A few had straggled among the conquered columns, where they stalked, in sullen discontent; attentive, though, as yet, passive observers of the moving multitude.

--James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans*¹

The scene described in this excerpt from Cooper's famous novel is the British retreat from Fort William Henry in August 1757. Orderly English troops march glumly toward a bloody end they cannot foresee. French victors stand by nobly and review the vanquished redcoats as they pass through the gates of their fort for the last time. No mention is made in the passage of the many British-allied Indians accompanying the surrendered British troops, though their presence is noted in other parts of the novel. In this paragraph the author chooses to draw a contrast between the orderly European soldiers and the "dark cloud" of skulking "savages," who occupy the "sweeping borders

¹Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans: A Narrative of 1757* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), 174.

of the woods” as if they were dangerous features of the natural environment. Their violent potential is effectively demonstrated throughout the book, but here the superior French and English forces keep them in a temporary state of passivity. This oppositional structure of Indians as dark, furtive, and primeval and Europeans as orderly, thoughtful, and culturally superior is a common feature of the romantic literature of Cooper’s era. Unfortunately for the Indians who actually interacted with British troops, traders, and cultural brokers near backcountry forts, this image of furtive natives waiting in the forest’s shadows, overawed by orderly European personnel and imposing fortress walls, has come to typify fort-based cultural interactions in the American imagination.²

More than many other fixtures of American popular mythology, frontier forts and the people associated with them have been incorporated into a heroic interpretation of colonial Indian-white relations. This historical model, popularized during the nineteenth-century romantic era by writers such as Cooper and historian Francis Parkman, saw British (and to a lesser degree, French) colonizers as spreaders of advanced European civilization. In short, those who encountered and overcame the challenges of the “savage” American wilderness and its inhabitants deserved the rewards of conquest. Soldiers manning forts were nothing less than the forbears of America’s republican promise. Indians, though admirable for their skills and primitive nobility, were considered features of the natural landscape. They were to be subdued by more civilized conquerors along with the forests and soil. Forts themselves were portrayed as cultural and economic entrepôts and battlegrounds of superior European civilization, overshadowing and

²For a study of the literary and historical treatment of the reduction of Fort William Henry that explains the event’s impact on subsequent French, British, and American nationalist mythologies, see Ian K. Steele, *Betrayals: Fort William Henry and the Massacre* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 149-85.

overawing the “primitive” natives who visited them. This nineteenth-century heroic view of the frontier and its outposts fits neatly into American nationalist mythology and remained powerful in history textbooks and popular culture well into the twentieth century.³

Heroism was fine for descendents of the victors in the cultural contests of the American colonial period, but not for the American natives whose ancestors bore the brunt of the European invasion. Indians knew well that their ancestors were always full participants in the continent’s colonial-era struggles and grated at their continued relegation as secondary figures in early American history. In the 1960s and 1970s, encouraged in part by the American civil rights movement and increased Indian activism, some historians began looking for new historical models that would amplify native agency in colonial affairs and correct some of the nationalistic, heroic depictions of white

³People growing up in the mid-twentieth century should be familiar with this romanticized image of the relationship between fort personnel and native Americans, though in the consensus-driven atmosphere of the 1930s-1950s, the British soldiers in such forts were often portrayed as villains who sought to subvert Indians for their own imperial (and hence undemocratic) purposes. See Walter Edmonds, *Drums Along the Mohawk* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1936) and Kenneth Roberts, *Northwest Passage* (New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1938), and the films based on those novels, for examples of enduring, heroic fort-based fiction. *Northwest Passage* became a popular television show in the 1950s, taking its place beside *The Wonderful World of Disney* and *Daniel Boone* (in the 1960s) as purveyors of romantic frontier ideals set in colonial America. For an overview of Parkman’s views on Indians and their place in the heroic historical tradition, see Bruce G. Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers: Canada’s “Heroic Age” Reconsidered* (Kingston, Ont.: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1985), 9-19. The foundational essay on the frontier and its relation to American democratic values is Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” *Annual Report of the American Historical Association* (1893): 197-227. For discussions of Turner’s thesis of frontier-based democratic rejuvenation and of frontier-oriented mythology in general, see Henry Nash Smith, *The Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), 250-60, and William Cronon, George Miles, and Jay Gitlin, “Becoming West: Toward a New Meaning for Western History,” in *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America’s Western Past* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992), 3-27.

colonizers.⁴ Some historians argued for models of analysis using anthropological methods to free the researcher from the colonialist cultural baggage that permeates much literature. Historians using these methodologies could view colonial intercultural meetings as diffusions of traits rather than impositions of dominant or superior cultures over lesser ones. In this view cultures borrowed from each other, with Indians acting as full players in a society that eventually came to be dominated by white Britons. Because backcountry forts were themselves important cultural contact points, an ethnohistorical perspective helps redefine the interactions that took place in such outposts, emphasizing cultural accommodation and Indian agency instead of the imperatives of the forts' builders.⁵

Historians have taken different paths to this goal of locating and emphasizing Indian agency in the cultural mix of colonial America. Some have resorted to global economic models to explain natives' eventual cultural and demographic loss. In these studies Indians are connected to a larger Atlantic exchange economy, either to cast them as victims of a coercive global trade system or to include them as socioeconomic actors

⁴Gary B. Nash, "The Image of the Indian in the Southern Colonial Mind," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser. (hereafter cited as *WMQ*, 3rd ser.) 29:2 (April 1972): 197-230; Nash, *Red, White, and Black: The Peoples of Early America* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974), 1-6; Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 1-31.

⁵Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 10-14. For the merits and promise of the ethnohistorical approach, see James Axtell, "Ethnohistory: An Historian's Viewpoint," in *The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 1-15. For some of the problems encountered by historians using this method, see James H. Merrell, "Some Thoughts on Colonial Historians and American Indians," *WMQ*, 3rd ser. 46:1 (January 1989): 94-119, and Daniel K. Richter, "Whose Indian History?" *WMQ*, 3rd ser. 50:2 (April 1993): 379-95.

alongside colonists and slaves.⁶ But some have criticized these deterministic economic models for a basic teleological flaw: they look at Indians' stories through the lens of their eventual loss.⁷ A more fruitful method for analyzing the kinds of interactions that took place near military posts is to highlight Indian experiences in more localized geographic or conceptual contexts. This does less well at explaining native participation in global systems, but comes closer to capturing Indian-European cultural interplay as it happened at the local level. Indians did not usually consider themselves part of a global system or an extended multicultural American republic. They knew that dependence on European

⁶The most familiar and thorough exposition of this application of Immanuel Wallerstein's world systems analysis to changing conditions among Indians in colonial America is Richard White's study of the Choctaws in *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navahos* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 1-146. Daniel K. Richter has argued for the deterministic role of trade in the dissolution of Iroquois society in *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992). For the world systems model itself and the effects of global markets on Indians in Spanish America, see Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System II: Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy, 1600-1750* (New York: Academic Press, 1980), and Steve J. Stern, "Feudalism, Capitalism, and the World System in the Perspective of Latin America and the Caribbean," *American Historical Review* 93:4 (October 1988): 829-72. For a world-systems model that incorporates Indians into an expanded colonial society alongside Europeans and slaves, peripheral in the British imperial system but dynamic in its own right, see Edward Countryman, "Indians, the Colonial Order, and the Social Significance of the American Revolution," *WMQ*, 3rd ser. 53:2 (April 1996): 342-62. Countryman's arguments are informed by the work of Jack P. Greene. See *Peripheries and Center: Constitutional Development in the Extended Politics of the British Empire and the United States, 1607-1788* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), and "Transatlantic Colonization and the Redefinition of Empire in the Early Modern Era," in *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the Americas, 1520-1800*, eds. Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy (New York: Routledge, 2002), 267-82.

⁷For critiques of the world system model, see Steven P. van Hoak, "Untangling the Roots of Dependency: Choctaw Economics, 1700-1860," *The American Indian Quarterly* 23:3-4 (Summer-Autumn 1999): 113-28, and Michael Zuckerman, "Through a Glass Darkly: Countryman's Radical American Revolution," *WMQ*, 3rd ser. 53:2 (April 1996): 373-78.

trade changed the way they lived and some native cultural revivalists, such as the Delaware prophet Neolin in the 1760s, argued for a return to traditional native lifeways. But many more Indians throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries chose European trade for the benefits it gave them and became well-informed and capable consumers.⁸

Emphasizing the local conditions and social strategies that influenced and bound individuals and small groups together in the backcountry is valuable in interpreting the kind of dynamics that typified fort-based relationships. Indians and Europeans were not simply their national imperatives writ small. In close company and at the mercy of a frequently unsympathetic natural environment, they often found cultural common ground in spite of their larger purposes and prejudices. Indians' concepts of power and spirituality influenced their resistance and diplomacy efforts as much as trade and politics.⁹ Local cultural accommodations took place wherever Indians met Europeans in

⁸For Indians' use of consumerism for their own purposes, see James Axtell, "The First Consumer Revolution," in *Beyond 1492: Encounters in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 125-51, and Arthur J. Ray, "Indians as Consumers in the Eighteenth Century," in *Old Trails and New Directions: Papers of the Third North American Fur Trade Conference*, eds. Carol M. Judd and Ray (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 255-71.

⁹Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

the Great Lakes region, redefining the entire notion of Indian-European diplomacy.¹⁰

Cultural brokers, negotiators and translators who moved seamlessly between cultural worlds helped bridge the differences between Indians and Europeans at the local level in pursuit of larger colonial goals.¹¹ One recent essay collection concentrates on backcountry contact points to redefine the concept of frontiers, identifying several physical and conceptual arenas of cultural change with diverse, permeable meanings. These studies suggest an early American world where no outcomes seemed inevitable to the participants. They reveal frontiers that were constantly negotiated using strategies informed by local priorities and outside imperatives. Most importantly, they move closer

¹⁰Richard White describes the process of cultural accommodation as one where “diverse peoples adjust their differences through what amounts to a process of creative, and often expedient, misunderstandings.” His “middle ground” was a place “in between cultures, peoples, and in between empires and the nonstate world of villages” where Indians and Europeans could negotiate cultural parameters in multitudes of localities. White’s influential model created a paradigm that presents a powerful method for locating cultural diffusion in local geographic and conceptual arenas, though his application of this model is only intended to represent cultural negotiations in the Great Lakes region. *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), x. White’s view of cultural accommodations forming in small, multiethnic native refugee towns has been challenged since the publication of his groundbreaking study. See the articles in the *William and Mary Quarterly*’s January 2006 forum on *The Middle Ground*, especially Heide Bodaker, “‘Nindoodemag’: The Significance of Algonquian Kinship Networks in the Eastern Great Lakes Region, 1600-1701,” and Brett Rushforth, “Slavery, the Fox Wars, and the Limits of Alliance,” *WMQ*, 3rd ser. 63:1 (January 2006): 23-52, 53-80. For a study of the historiographical impact of White’s study, see Catherine Desbarats, “Following *The Middle Ground*,” 81-96, in the same volume.

¹¹Daniel K. Richter, “Cultural Brokers and Intercultural Politics: New York-Iroquois Relations, 1664-1701,” *Journal of American History* 75:1 (June 1988): 40-67; James H. Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1999), esp. 28-34. Merrell’s study challenges notions of ubiquitous, small-scale, creative cultural negotiations and instead asserts the role of experienced cultural brokers in bringing people together in the backcountry. For a historiography of this literature, describing its promise and pitfalls, see Philip Levy, *Fellow Travelers: Indians and Europeans Contesting the Early American Trail* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007), 149n9.

to interpreting Indian-white interactions from a native vantage. Viewing fort studies from the perspectives of Indians emphasizes the efforts and importance of individual contact in the backcountry, the fluidity of cultural exchange and influence, the difficulties and promises fostered by mutual misunderstandings, and the degree to which backcountry contingencies could often squelch larger political, military, and economic purposes.¹²

This study examines five British forts in colonial America to emphasize the interweaving of local and general socio-cultural imperatives at backcountry contact points. In each case Indian traditions and cultural imperatives mixed with colonial military missions and everyday challenges of life in and near outposts. Imperial

¹²Andrew R. L. Cayton and Fredrika J. Teute, eds., *Contact Points: American Frontiers from the Mohawk Valley to the Mississippi, 1750-1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 1-15. Seeing backcountry contact points as touchstones for cultural dynamism helps illuminate the kinds of interactions that took place near forts. A "contact point" vantage reorients the notion of frontiers as small places full of dynamic potential and promise, rather than large geographic boundaries or empty places. It also helps avoid the Eurocentric perspective contained in older notions of frontiers. From the localized perspective of a fort or Indian town, the only frontiers that mattered were the ones that defined personal meetings and exchanges between people from diverse backgrounds. For a particularly rich example, see Lucy Eldersveld Murphy's study of accommodation between Indians, Europeans, and Métis in fur trading and mining communities in the Fox-Wisconsin river country. She posits that negotiation of gender roles in such communities determined the success and failure of accommodation. "To Live Among Us: Accommodation, Gender, and Conflict in the Western Great Lakes Region, 1760-1832," in *Contact Points*, 270-303. Examples of studies that provide models for understanding Indian-European motives from a native perspective include Gregory Evans Dowd, *War Under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, and the British Empire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), James Axtell, "Through Another Glass Darkly: Early Indian Views of Europeans" in *After Columbus: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 125-43, James H. Merrell, *The Indians' New World: Catawbas and their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1989), and Michael N. McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and its Peoples, 1724-1774* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992). Daniel K. Richter has argued for a complete redefinition of colonial American history based on the Indians' point of view in *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

objectives and pan-Indian concerns run through each of these case studies. But this dissertation moves toward a view of backcountry contact points as places where local concerns often trumped outside strategies. This often created tension between the liminal worlds of fort-based relations and the responsibilities and goals of outside Indian and British societies. But for the Indians and military people who met, traded, and parleyed at forts, immediate concerns defined a kind of cultural exchange separate from outside traditions, values, and imperatives. One of the hardest parts of fort-based interactions for both British and Indian participants was negotiating the terms of these small liminal arenas while still answering the pressures of outside responsibilities. Forts were their own little worlds. This study seeks to recognize elements of interaction that could take place only in backcountry contact points, instead of seeing forts merely as peripheral outposts of empire. Looking at these cases from an Indian perspective, as much as possible, helps to prevent being lead astray by the overwhelming European cultural saturation of the primary documents.

Unfortunately, this Eurocentric documentary bias is difficult to avoid when studying forts. Documents from the American colonial period were almost all recorded by Europeans, and even those documents relating Indian speech were taken down by European scribes and filtered through English and French interpreters. This problem is exacerbated by the military requirements of fort life. Commandants and Indian agents filed regular reports and wrote many letters, but almost all of them were official in nature and dealt with military matters, operations relating to their European rivals, and the everyday logistics of fort life. Indian affairs were frequent topics of these communications, but fort personnel usually recorded only 'vital' information: Indian

threats, amounts and costs of Indian presents, minutes of diplomatic congresses, and other details deemed important enough to send on to military and political superiors. Ethnographic information is difficult to glean from most fort-related source material.

There are notable exceptions to this dearth of useful Indian material. Raymond Demere, the South Carolina officer who commanded Fort Loudoun in what is now eastern Tennessee, seems to have spent every waking moment writing in great detail about Indian activities. Colonel John Wilkins, the penultimate commandant of Fort Chartres in Illinois, kept a detailed journal of Indian activities at the fort during his command. But even these rich sources are laden with the biases of the writers and are problematic sources for studying Indian activity. Archaeology does not help much in this regard either. Fort sites have presented sparse evidence of the presence of Indians, which is surprising given our documentary knowledge of abundant Indian activity near such posts as Crown Point, Michilimackinac, Niagara, Chartres, and many others.¹³ Since all of the source material must be sifted for European bias and military and trade prerogatives, any attempt to reconstruct Indian activities wholly from these sources remains problematic. What emerge from the sources are stories of the European

¹³A good example of this paucity is David R. Starbuck's survey of British military sites in upstate New York, where thousands of Indians joined British soldiers in staging military operations during the colonial wars of the eighteenth century. The material culture found or reported relates much useful information about army life, but little about native activities. Fort archaeology is often limited by the goals or preconceptions of historical societies, donors, or the archaeologists themselves. If archaeologists look for military evidence instead of native culture, then that is what they are more likely to find. But in the case of Crown Point, Fort Edwards, and other New York sites, it is more likely that Indians stayed for short periods of time, and used European materials and transient settlement methods that might not easily appear in the archaeological record. British fort sites tend to turn up the expected evidence of military and trading activities, but frustratingly little about the efforts of Indian allies and neighbors. Starbuck, *The Great Warpath: British Military Sites from Albany to Crown Point* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1999).

occupation of these posts that are complicated by the ethnohistorical Indian vantage, rather than true histories of Indian participants.¹⁴ But even if Indians' activities near British forts cannot be described in rich detail, it is still fruitful to examine the substantial extent of Indian agency apparent in the sources.

Fort personnel always found out quickly that Indians and their lifeways would matter greatly to their missions. The initial interaction processes certainly followed pragmatic guidelines; both Indians and Europeans knew what had worked before, and used experience and common sense to learn the "rules" of their new surroundings and neighbors. Often an experienced cultural broker, usually an Indian agent or trader, would help with this process. Negotiating a working relationship with local and visiting Indians was vital. Garrisons, traders, and Indian agents, far from the support and conveniences of European culture, had to find ways to accommodate the pressures of the natural environment in order to find food, traverse the backcountry, and conduct warfare. This necessitated establishing peaceful relations with local natives who already possessed the information and skills necessary to establish a successful outpost.

While immediate confrontation and violence could ensue from these meetings, especially in times of heightened political tensions, cooperation was often the first instinct of both natives and newcomers. Forts were places where Indians could temporarily put aside their mistrust of newcomers and receive news of far-off events and material gifts. Soldiers, traders, and craftsmen living in backcountry outposts had separated themselves from many of the rules and structures of their own societies, despite

¹⁴A recent exception is James H. Merrell's study of the multiethnic Indian trading village of Shamokin, whose residents experienced significant change when Pennsylvania located Fort Augusta there. "Shamokin, 'The Very Seat of the Prince of Darkness': Unsettling the Early American Frontier," in Cayton and Teute, *Contact Points*, 16-59.

their maintenance of military rigor and discipline. In their new zone of interaction, they inhabited a cultural arena separate from their European-colonial world, where cooperation with their new neighbors meant success and survival. Indians seeking trade and other perceived benefits of European friendship entered the same arena when they interacted with fort personnel. This stage of backcountry interaction contained great promise for coexistence and mutual benefit, as long as the powerful outside pressures of European and Indian objectives allowed forts and their surrounding landscapes to remain centers of cultural confluence rather than sites of opposition and conflict.¹⁵

For British officers and soldiers, these outside pressures were constant, especially during wartime. Forts served a multitude of roles in colonial America. First and foremost, fortifications served as bulwarks against military incursions by European enemies or as marks of possession for Great Britain or its colonial governments. During conflicts such as the Seven Years' War, forts and garrisons were almost always on alert and armed as well as finances would allow. Carts and bateaux would traverse fragile supply lines through harsh terrain to support the posts. Still, forts and other outposts were self-sufficient to a degree corresponding with their remoteness. Soldiers worked as hunters, fishermen, woodcutters, and farmers to supply posts with food and fuel. Communication with outside authorities was as fragile as the supply lines. Fort commandants were

¹⁵ Liminality is a useful framework for understanding this stage of cultural meetings, even though many people interacting near military forts did not allow themselves to change culturally. The theory posits a middle stage of change defined by heightened communication and cooperation, and a partial, sometimes temporary abandonment of previously held cultural values and structures. Though the theory initially described social and cultural rites of passage, the concept is helpful in understanding places and situations where all manner of interactions took place. Victor Turner, "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage," in *Betwixt and Between: Patterns of Masculine and Feminine Initiation*, eds. Louise Carus Mahdi, Steven Foster, and Meredith Little (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1987), 3-19.

expected to keep the peace with Indians who controlled the country and its lines of communication and to punish them if they attacked British travelers or troops. This was especially important at small outposts and blockhouses, which were almost wholly at the mercy of the local populations. In larger forts like Niagara, Pitt, or Chartres, garrisons could hold off Indian attacks but were always subject to siege warfare; only trenches and European artillery could reduce a substantial stone or earthen fort. But in most places, British forts needed Indian help to carry out their primary mission of holding the continental interior against French and Spanish foes.¹⁶

Forts were also centers of trade and thus attracted Indian activity. Not all forts allowed trade activities within the walls of the palisade. Frequent Indian visitors, some of them unfamiliar with unsure allegiances, created an unacceptable breach of security if allowed the run of the post. Instead, traders would travel to Indians' villages or operate from trading towns adjacent to the fort, as was the case at Pittsburgh, Detroit, and many other locations. Valuable loads of trade goods would often be stored in the forts for protection against theft by natives or Europeans. But the main object of forts in the Indian

¹⁶The most complete social history of British military experience in the American backcountry is Michael N. McConnell, *Army and Empire: British Soldiers on the American Frontier, 1758-1775* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), esp. 32-52 for an overview of the various kinds of forts used west of the Appalachians. For the roles of backcountry forts and soldiers in Virginia and Pennsylvania during the Seven Years' War, see Matthew C. Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry: The Seven Years' War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754-1765* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003), 100-07, and R. S. Stephenson, "Pennsylvania Provincial Soldiers in the Seven Years' War," *Pennsylvania History* 62 (1995): 196-213. Establishing larger European backcountry forts in the second half of the eighteenth century transformed Indian-European combat. Guerilla fighting, which dominated North American warfare throughout the previous century, gave way to siege warfare as French, and later British, military contingencies demanded more substantial forts to guard larger regional army units and naval operations. Ian K. Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 221-22.

trade was to protect trade operations themselves. Indian consumers knew that British garrisons could launch small-scale punitive expeditions and offer refuge for traders against Indian breaches of trust. However, it was often the Indians' themselves who needed protection against disreputable traders. Fort commandants were not only guards of English interests, but often the only representatives of English authority available. This made them responsible for enforcing trade agreements between the crown or individual colonies and Indian groups. Indians never ceased to request British intercession in trade practices they considered unfair.¹⁷

Given the extent to which backcountry forts have been imagined as agents of Indian dispossession and oppression, it is surprising that Indians found so much use for them. Enforcement of trade regulations was one of the reasons. Protection of Indian families against French and native aggression was another. This was especially true in Iroquoia during the Seven Years' War, when the British military sought the aid of allied Iroquois groups in their efforts against France. Iroquois leaders made it clear that their aid would never materialize unless New York agreed to build forts to protect Indian families while their men assisted in military operations. These requests for forts and blockhouses to be built near Iroquois "castles" were frequent during the early years of the war, though colonial governments strained to provide the funding. Sir William Johnson, who later became Superintendent of the Indian Department in the North, adamantly argued for the establishment of as many forts as the Iroquois requested at the outset of the Seven Years'

¹⁷See chapter 1 for many examples of this role of fort personnel.

War.¹⁸ In addition to the refuge forts would offer Iroquois families, they would also invigorate the fur trade, which was often depressed during wartime because of the lack of adequate protection. The Six Nations understood their importance to British wartime objectives. They used their influence to demand forts when necessary and to control the shape and mission of forts and garrisons when possible. For example, in February 1756 an Oneida speaker, Canaghquaeson, reminded Johnson of the many Oneida requests for a fort. His requests were more like demands. He informed Johnson politely of the Oneidas' "unanimous resolution of having one," and insisted on a reputable garrison that would prevent trade irregularities and excessive sales of rum.¹⁹

Indians demanded friendly and dependable garrisons, even if they did not always get along with them. During King George's War, William Johnson pointed this out to New York governor George Clinton, who wished to employ Iroquois men as permanent scouts at Fort Saratoga. Indians would rather fight the French directly in Canada, according to Johnson, rather than "keep in a Garrison among so many Christians."²⁰ Regular soldiers often possessed little experience with Indian contact or knowledge of their customs. Provincial troops were occasionally settlers, serving in defense of their farms and families against French and Indian threats. More often they were day laborers or artisans who were unfamiliar with military rigor or Indian affairs.²¹ It is not surprising, therefore, that garrisons sometimes treated Indians with less tolerance or politeness than

¹⁸Johnson to Shirley, Apr. 9, 1756, in *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, eds. James Sullivan, et al. (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1921-65), 9:424-25 (hereafter cited as *WJP*).

¹⁹"An Indian Conference," *WJP*, 9:378-79. For other instances of Iroquois requests for forts, see *WJP* 2:488-90, 768-69; 9:334, 370, 414-16, 457-58, 498, 568-69.

²⁰Johnson to Clinton, Mar. 18, 1746, *WJP*, 1:80-82.

²¹Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry*, 107-21.

native customs demanded. For example, during the Seven Years' War, a young Mohawk man approached Fort Johnson in New York to welcome the newly arrived garrison. Instead of being greeted with hospitality and presents, the young man was insulted and sent away. Soon afterward some of the garrison entered the town surrounding the fort and assaulted Indians there, injuring one seriously. Several Mohawk chiefs complained angrily to Johnson, demanding that he either replace the garrison with men who were "acquainted with them and their Customs" or face the violent consequences.²²

British affronts were often simple acts of disrespect or impoliteness, which stoked suspicions that officers and enlisted men did not have the Indians' interests at heart. This was especially true in areas such as New York and Pennsylvania where forts had been built with the permission of Indian allies. For example, in 1762 an Onondaga speaker complained that officers at frontier posts would not speak with his people as friends should. "The Officers at the several Posts, when we want to Say anything to them on Business, Trade, etc. will not hear Us, or look upon Us, but tell us they have nothing to say, or do with Us, nor with the Trade," he complained to Johnson. "So that really we are in a very bad Situation, and wish that there were such Officers as wou'd behave more friendly to Us." The Onondaga speaker also wished that there were more trained interpreters available to prevent such "misunderstandings."²³

²²Threats of Indian violence were almost never made explicitly to British allies; such threats would be considered breaches of polite diplomacy. Instead, headmen would warn of the unstable tempers of their "young men" and how difficult it was to keep them under control if offended. "Journal of Indian Affairs," *WJP*, 13:104-07; Johnson to James Abercromby, Jan. 14, 1758, *WJP*, 2:771-73.

²³"An Indian Conference," *WJP*, 10:505-08. For a Pennsylvania example of Indian complaints against garrisons, see Croghan to Johnson, Sep. 4, 1762, *WJP*, 3:873-75.

As much as Indians complained about fort personnel, their greater fears were that backcountry forts would attract British civilian settlers. Indian groups throughout eastern North America actively and consistently resisted increased settlement. "The Indians are much more dissatisfied at the appearance of Settlers, than ever at a Garrison," Johnson wrote to British commander-in-chief Thomas Gage in 1767, "As the former increases and overspreads the country."²⁴ Conflicts between Indians and backcountry colonists occurred frequently throughout the colonial period. English settlers, unlike many of their French forbears, were mainly farmers bent on clearing woods for arable land. This destroyed hunting and fishing sites and upset the environmental balance of Indian lifeways. After the devastating geographic dislocations of the seventeenth century, many Indian groups, especially those in the Ohio Valley and the Great Lakes region, were determined to oppose increased English settlement into the West. The Proclamation of 1763, which forbade new settlements west of the Appalachian range, was intended to placate disgruntled Indians as well as to forestall individual colonies' land claims. But as Indians knew well, colonial governments needed backcountry settlements to strengthen their land claims and to profit from commodities produced in the West. Only settlers and their plows could successfully transform sections of the American West into British or provincial strongholds. Examples of violent incidents between backcountry settlers and Indians are too numerous to mention here. Of the five forts included as main topics in this

²⁴Johnson to Gage, Sep. 22, 1767, in the Thomas Gage Papers, American Series, William C. Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, vol. 70 (hereafter cited as Gage Papers AS).

study, four feature Indian-settler animosities as primary sources of regional conflict.²⁵

Even during wartime some English-allied Indians looked upon forts and large garrisons as agents of domination, despite their other advantages. An Onondaga delegation made this clear to the proprietors of Pennsylvania in 1756 when the province announced plans to build Fort Augusta near Shamokin. "We cannot comprehend the method of making war which is made use of, by our Brethren the English," they complained. "When we go to War, our manner is to destroy a Nation & theres an end of it. But the English Chiefly regard building Forts, which Looks as if their only Scheme was to take possession of the Lands."²⁶ Cherokees treating with the French governor of Louisiana spoke openly of English forts as sites of oppression and scorned them as "Houses of Force" and "horred Magazines."²⁷ This attitude only worsened during times of peace when threats of French depredations decreased. Kanadiohara, a Genesee Seneca chief, complained in April 1762 that British blockhouses built between German Flats and

²⁵Indian-settler relations were not always, or even usually, contentious. Indians and settlers often found much common ground, and their mutual animosities are only accentuated here because it was a common source for native fears of forts. Studying relations between European settlers and Indians in the backcountry demands a nuanced approach that takes into account the religious, racial, cultural, national, and economic issues involved. Just about every study of the trans-Appalachian frontier examines a facet of this relationship. For a concise discussion and synthesis of these issues, see Gregory H. Nobles, "Breaking Into the Backcountry: New Approaches to the Early American Frontier, 1750-1800," *WMQ*, 3rd ser. 43:4 (Oct. 1989): 641-670. For lower Mississippi examples of Indian-settler-slave interactions, see Daniel H. Usner, Jr., *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 149-218. For a post-Revolution look at New York Indian-settler issues, see Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderlands of the American Revolution* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 128-41. For a full-length study of Indian-settler violence and how it affected notions of frontiers and nationalism, see Patrick Griffin, *American Leviathan: Empire, Nation, and Revolutionary Frontier* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007).

²⁶"Extracts of Indian Papers," *WJP*, 9:517.

²⁷"Preliminary Articles of Peace Between Kerlerac and the Cherokees," *WJP*, 9:574-81.

Oswego in New York had been represented originally as temporary wartime outposts, but now looked more permanent. He outlined several abuses by officers and soldiers and asked that the forts be removed immediately, “as the French are now entirely Conquered.”²⁸ Iroquois speakers made the same request in the multiethnic village of Oquaga later that year and warned of imminent violence. “Some of our Warriors are foolish,” they warned Johnson, “And some of our Brothers soldiers don’t fear God.” They pleaded that the forts be “pull’d down & kick’d out of the way” before conflict ensued.²⁹ Indian acceptance of British forts was based upon necessity and the degree to which they could determine the goals, size, and permanence of the posts.

If Indians decided that British forts did not answer their needs, the consequences could be severe, especially for smaller posts. The cost of failing to meet native expectations was made most apparent during the 1763-1764 Indian uprising, sometimes called Pontiac’s Rebellion. In the space of a few weeks, every Great Lakes and Ohio Valley post that France had ceded to Britain in the 1763 Treaty of Paris fell to Indian attack save the large posts at Detroit, Niagara, and Pittsburgh. Both Detroit and Fort Pitt endured months-long sieges, and Niagara’s portage was attacked and held in a virtual state of siege by Genesee Senecas. Forts throughout the Ohio Valley and Great Lakes region either succumbed to attack or were abandoned. The story of this rebellion has undergone years of interpretive rigor, from Parkman’s early depiction of a desperate last-ditch battle of the races, to modern studies that emphasize Indian agency, power, and

²⁸“Indian Proceedings,” *WJP*, 3:707.

²⁹Indians at Oquaga to Johnson, Aug. 30, 1762, *WJP*, 3:870-72. Iroquois groups, feeling crowded and threatened by the mid-eighteenth century, resented new forts except when military contingencies demanded them. For more examples of requests for the destruction of forts after the French threat had passed, see *WJP*, 4:125, 196-203; 8:644-47.

geographic defense as motives.³⁰ But the attacks of the Indian uprising show much from a localized perspective as well. Military reports show a remarkable level of familiarity at small outposts between Indians and soldiers. At Michilimackinac, soldiers casually enjoyed watching a game of *bag' gat' iway*, an Indian ball game, moments before the Ojibwa attackers overran the fort. Fort Miamis was taken by surprise when the British commandant, Ensign Robert Holmes, was (perhaps unintentionally) lured into a fatal trap by the native woman who shared his bed. The garrison of Fort Edward Augustus, formerly Fort La Baye in Wisconsin, listened to the warnings of their native friends from across Lake Michigan and abandoned their post before it was attacked. Despite mutual fears and distrusts that were great enough to spark a wide-scale Indian rebellion, British fort personnel and Indians enjoyed considerable closeness at the local level.³¹

Indians viewed British forts with ambivalence. They visited them frequently for trade goods, protection, and information. In some cases Indian women found European

³⁰ After many years in which Parkman's *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* and Howard H. Peckham's *Pontiac and the Indian Uprising* remained the only familiar and full studies of the conflict, recent writers have contributed a wave of scholarship on this important period. Richard White asserts the reemergence of Indian diplomatic agency because of the rebellion. *The Middle Ground*, 269-314. Michael N. McConnell sees the uprising as a collection of local conflicts woven together, including a "Western Indian Defensive War" against further British encroachment in the Ohio Valley. *A Country Between*, 182-206. William R. Nester revisits an older model, blaming the whole thing on British commander-in-chief Jeffrey Amherst's incompetent and intolerant Indian policies. *Haughty Conquerors": Amherst and the Great Indian Uprising of 1763* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2000). In *War Under Heaven*, Gregory Evans Dowd reinterprets the war in terms of the increasingly polarizing qualities of both British and Indian combatants; each side's notions of leadership, autonomy, and spirituality led to a breakdown in efforts to interact amicably. See also David Dixon, *Never Come To Peace Again: Pontiac's Uprising and the Fate of the British Empire in North America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005), and Richard Middleton, *Pontiac's War: Its Causes, Course, and Consequences* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

³¹ For sources describing the fall of forts during the Indian uprising of 1763, see *WJP* 10:690-746. See also Dowd, *War Under Heaven*, 124-28.

husbands in these outposts. But many Indians hated the posts, even while they found them useful. Forts provided presents of useful goods, provisions, and rum. But they also attracted British farmers, to whom Indians were simply in the way. Fort commandants used their power to confer presents and regulate trade to treat Indian visitors as underlings and dependents, though the visitors were often less than impressed with British attempts to act tough and appear manly. Forts were also bases for military operations, where thousands of Indians joined British and colonial military forces during the imperial wars of the eighteenth century. But when British allies failed to treat Indians as real friends and partners, Indians could easily turn against them.

British imperial and provincial authorities shared the natives' ambivalence about the outposts, but for different reasons. Colonial policy depended upon capitalizing on American natural resources and manufactures. This involved expanding the Indian fur trade and increasing agricultural output through proliferation of settlements, and both enterprises demanded military protection. Indians approved of and depended on trade, as long as it was properly regulated. But the settlements that would inevitably follow angered Indians, making most backcountry operations difficult, dangerous, and unprofitable. Threats from European enemies mandated keeping military posts throughout the backcountry. But British plans to hold the region only made sense if the expense of forts and armies in the West was justified by eventual profit. Private joint-stock companies that provided most of the operating capital for new colonial ventures would only invest in backcountry operations if they could be assured of military protection. But the Lords of Trade found it difficult to justify the expense of operating forts if trade revenues did not sufficiently enrich the mother country. Provincial

governments found these expenses even more onerous. How much British policy makers remained devoted to an image of America filled with forts flying Union Jacks depended upon whether they believed that they could profit from the continental interior.

Provincial officials often found balancing these concerns difficult. Two of the forts in this study, Fort Loudoun in Tennessee and Fort Allen in Pennsylvania, were built by provincial governments prompted by the exigencies of the Seven Years' War. Fort Allen was constructed as part of a defensive line protecting Pennsylvania's cities and towns from French and Delaware attacks. Because it was a response to an emergency, Fort Allen's construction was not controversial or challenged by the provincial government. But as time went on and the fort seemed to offer more advantages for visiting Indians than for Pennsylvania's traders or settlers, its continued maintenance became problematic for provincial officials.

Fort Loudoun's story presented a different set of problems for South Carolina's government. The fort would be hundreds of miles from Charlestown in the Tennessee Overhills country, and seemed to be proposed almost entirely to please the British-allied Overhill Cherokees. No emergency prompted its building except persistent rumors of imminent French incursions into the region and reports of Cherokee duplicity. But colonial officials argued that the long-term economic strength of the colony demanded that staunch Cherokee friends guard the "wild" backcountry. Of course, the personnel at a fort built largely to please Indian allies had to put Indian affairs above all other concerns. In the end, Fort Loudoun did poorly in guaranteeing South Carolina's prosperity because it failed to please its Cherokee neighbors.

Enforcing military policy in the trans-Appalachian West fell to the British army. This made the political balancing act even more troublesome because military readiness mandated holding forts won from France during the Seven Years' War. But the operations were so expensive and dangerous that even commander-in-chief Gage became an ardent opponent of the fort system. Anything that annoyed Indians made little sense to Gage. Unhappy Indians undermined the fur trade and made the continental interior unprofitable. He argued that forts had proven incapable of protecting Pennsylvania, Virginia, and the Carolinas during the Seven Years' War. They were unsuited to managing the Indian trade because of their stationary locations; traders and Indian agents living near native population centers were preferable. Colonists would do no better in Indian country than forts to enrich the empire because the backcountry's remoteness made any crops raised or merchandise produced there too expensive. Gage's biggest concern was Indian dissatisfaction with British encroachment. "I know of nothing so liable to bring on a serious Quarrell with the Indians, as an Invasion of their Property," Gage wrote to the Earl of Hillsborough, the British Secretary of State for the colonies. "Were they drove from their Forest, the Peltry Trade would decrease, and it is not impossible that worse Savages would take refuge in them." By the early 1770s he was proposing that forts be abandoned, new settlements restricted, and Britain's Indian trading partners be left alone. "Let the Savages enjoy their Deserts in quiet, little Bickerings that will unavoidably sometimes happen," Gage recommended, after many years of failing to provide Britain with a profitable backcountry.³²

³²Gage to Hillsborough, Nov. 10, 1770, Gage Papers, English Series, William C. Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, vol. 19 (hereafter cited as Gage Papers ES).

Sir William Johnson knew that maintaining former French forts would be difficult. French Indian agents, traders, and *habitants* had spent decades spreading stories of British native-extirpation plans. New British garrisons, usually much larger than those employed by France, seemed to many Indians a fulfillment of those threats. Backcountry forts, according to Johnson, could “in no way prevent the Invasion of the Indians,” who could easily skirt the forts in small parties, elude the pursuits of garrisons, destroy and sack boats and settlements, and cut off supply routes. More importantly, the forts were increasingly seen by natives as an effort to “hem in” and check Indians’ movements, making it more likely that natives would reject the posts’ advantages and attack them. Settlers were familiar with the kind of devastation and cruelty Indians sometimes could visit upon backcountry inhabitants during times of conflict, and fleeing colonists provided no advantages to Britain. Johnson believed that smaller posts, using the “French Maxim” of rewarding Indians with presents, were the best way to maintain trade and good relations with the native masters the trans-Appalachian country.³³

Presents were the key to keeping Indians happy at forts because they answered the Indians’ need to believe and trust in their European partners. Part of the present exchange was functional from the Indians’ perspective. They had come to depend upon presents of food, ammunition, clothing, rum, and other necessities and had incorporated presents into their material lifeways. Restricting them caused economic harm to native groups. But even more importantly, presents were physical signs that the people giving them were truly friends. Indian notions of hospitality demanded that visitors receive good treatment

³³Johnson to the Earl of Egremont, May 1762, *WJP*, 460-65; Johnson to the Lords of Trade, Aug. 20, 1762, *WJP*, 3:865-69; Johnson to Cadwallader Colden, June 9, 1764, *WJP*, 4:442-44.

and something of value from their hosts. When Indians came to forts their visits were leaps of faith, at least in part. They had no way of knowing the efficacy of British or French words. But to give valuable goods to a friend was a step toward proving one's love and trustworthiness. Indians reasonably interpreted any restriction or retrenchment of presents as an alteration of the terms of European-Indian friendship. Such actions could have dire consequences for future amities.³⁴

Indian expectations of presents made forts very expensive propositions. Sir Jeffrey Amherst, Gage's predecessor, wondered why Indians should be rewarded for simply visiting forts when other occupants of the Americas made their livings through labor and trade. During the Indian uprising in 1763, Amherst told Johnson that when hostilities ended, the Indians involved should only expect a resumption of trade. "As to *presents*, it would certainly be the highest presumption in them to expect any," he told his Indian supervisor. "They can never be considered by us as a people to whom we owe *rewards*, and it would madness, to the highest degree, ever to bestow favors on a race who have so treacherously, and without provocation on our side, attacked our Posts, and

³⁴A classic study of Indian gifts is Wilbur R. Jacobs, *Diplomacy and Indian Gifts: Anglo-French Rivalry along the Ohio and Northwest Frontiers, 1748-1763* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1950). For a more recent exploration of the ways Indians understood and used gifts, see David Murray, *Indian Giving: Economies of Power in Indian-White Exchanges* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 27-38. On the social and cultural meanings of Indian presents, see White, *The Middle Ground*, 112-15, 403-04. For a concise study showing the importance of gift-giving in maintaining Indian-European reciprocal relations, and how Indian pleas for pity and claims of poverty were often more ritual than reality, see Bruce M. White, "Give Us a Little Milk": The Social and Cultural Meaning of Gift Giving in the Lake Superior Fur Trade," in *Rendezvous: Selected Papers of the Fourth North American Fur Trade Conference, 1981*, ed. Thomas C. Buckley (St. Paul, MN: The Conference, 1984), 185-97.

butchered our Garrisons.”³⁵ Amherst’s effort to restrict presents was an important trigger of the 1763 uprising.³⁶

Gage knew better than Amherst the extent to which Indians saw presents as persistent proofs of friendship, and he understood the inseparability of maintaining forts and giving gifts. “As long as there are Forts in the Indian Country,” he wrote to Hillsborough, “The distant Indians accustomed to transact all Business there, will still haunt the Forts, on many Pretences, of Business with the Commanders, whether on the subjects of Trade or Negotiation, and they are never to be turned away, without some Present.”³⁷ Indians understood the importance of their friendship to British colonial plans, and availed themselves of the proofs of that friendship whenever they could. Indians did not see this as bribery; they knew the difference between gifts and payment for services rendered. As long as Indians equated gifts with friendship and trustworthiness the fort system would remain expensive.

One gift that troubled British fort personnel more than any other was liquor. Physical dependency not the issue; Indians were almost never addicted to alcohol. Though it was one of the most popular trade goods plied in the backcountry, the supply was never constant or dependable enough for many Indians to become dependent upon it.

³⁵Amherst to Johnson, Sep. 30, 1763, in *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, eds. E. B. O’ Callaghan and Berthold Fernow (Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons, 1853-1887), 7:568-69 (hereafter cited as NYCD).

³⁶Generations of historians have placed most of the blame for the uprising on Amherst’s unfortunate Indian policies. Francis Parkman, *The Conspiracy of Pontiac and the Indian War after the Conquest of Canada*, 2 vols. (1851, repr., Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 1:181,195; Howard Peckham, *Pontiac and the Indian Uprising* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994), 70-72; Nester, “*Haughty Conquerers*,” *passim*. Dowd sees Amherst’s gift policy not as the cause of the uprising, but as a trigger. *War Under Heaven*, 72-78.

³⁷Gage to Hillsborough, Sep. 9, 1769, *WJP*, 6:356.

Nor were Indians any more susceptible to its intoxicating effects than anyone else in colonial America. The difference between Indians and Europeans was in how alcohol was used. To native consumers, alcohol was almost purely a means of intoxication, which had many social and cultural advantages. While intoxicated, Indians swept aside the cares and responsibilities of the world. The normal restrictions of social reciprocity did not hold for actions committed while drunk. Furthermore, intoxication was a state similar to dreaming, in which Indians could communicate with lost friends or the spirit world. Strong drink also fulfilled native social roles, such as welcoming and mourning rituals. Indians did not share the European concept of drinking as a social pleasure or as a brace against illness or cold. But drunkenness and alcohol abuse brought all the same devastations to native lifeways that existed in European culture, including violence, disease, poverty, and domestic upheaval. Despite attempts to control its sale and spread by both Indians and Europeans, rum and brandy became important consumables in native life. Indians would purchase it if they could, but they also expected presents of liquor when visiting their friends in French and British forts.³⁸

This tendency of Indians and traders to use British forts as alcohol markets bothered British authorities, but there was little anyone could do about the problem except scold the participants. Indians expected rum at the posts and left “disgusted” if they did not receive it.³⁹ Liquor provided a perfect excuse for native activities that the

³⁸For a recent study that covers the topic in detail, including alcohol’s importance in native rituals and social practices, see Peter C. Mancall, *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995). See also Dowd, *War Under Heaven*, 103-04; Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 64-67.

³⁹William Dunbar to Gage, Aug. 31, 1763, Gage Papers AS, vol. 9.

British found troubling, such as intelligence gathering and raiding settlements.⁴⁰ Most worrisome for fort personnel was when Indians used the fort itself as a drinking establishment or store. Johnson berated Iroquois leaders for not restricting these activities. "Your People are daily coming hither with Numbers of Kegs as if this was a Trading House for Rum," he scolded Six Nations representatives at Fort Johnson.⁴¹ Gage observed that native leaders "constantly complain that it is brought to them," but despite their complaints "they can't refrain from drinking it and even demand it, and are angry when it is refused."⁴² Fort commandants attempted to restrict the sale of rum repeatedly, and tried to include less alcohol in their allocation of presents. When Indians obtained alcohol near a fort, they were sometimes required to consume it some distance away.

Liquor struck at the heart of British attempts to impose mastery over a region. If Indians viewed military posts as places for entertainment and alcohol, then the forts' roles as intimidating outposts of empire would be undermined. Because liquor was one commodity that only Europeans could provide in volume and one that the military felt the need to guard and restrict, Indians would continue to associate forts and alcohol throughout the colonial period and beyond.

For these reasons and others, Indians continued to visit British forts wherever they existed, despite their frequently held resentments. Some of those forts were built at the behest of Indians, who took care that posts not be used to subvert Indian culture or to destroy Indian lives. Other forts were strongly opposed, but native diplomats, warriors, and women did their best to ensure that the forts and garrisons would not attract settlers

⁴⁰Johnson to Gage, Mar. 1759, Gage Papers AS, vol. 2; "An Indian Conference," Aug. 11, 1762, *WJP*, 10:480-83.

⁴¹"Indian Proceedings," Apr. 26-27, 1757, *WJP*, 9:693-94.

⁴²Gage to Hillsborough, Sep. 8, 1770, Gage Papers ES, vol. 18.

or endanger their people. In every case Indians saw British backcountry forts as fixtures upon their native landscape. Forts often occupied important geographic points that Indians were bound to pass. But despite the redcoats and British colonial aspirations within, Indians did not see forts as alien. There was nothing unusual to Indians about firearms, fighting men, and wooden pales.

British fort personnel hoped that their outposts would be harbingers of the successful spread of European trade and culture. Indians had other ideas. Some used violence to advance their aims; others used friendship and diplomacy. Those who did not advocate tearing forts down immediately worked to incorporate them into their native topography and lifeways. But native acceptance of, and opposition to, military posts in the backcountry were not dichotomous features of Indian-white relations. They were connected functions in Indians' attempts to negotiate the terms of an unwanted European invasion that, by the 1750s, had clearly come to stay. The most surprising notion that continually springs from the primary documents of colonial America is the extent to which Indian agency persistently affected, redefined, and reordered the missions of British frontier forts and their personnel. Far different from the cowering, suspicious natives of Cooper's novels and subsequent popular imagination, Indians saw forts as Indian-European places, and they were full actors in the dramas played out in these centers of cultural confluence.

Cherokee leaders in the remote Tennessee Overhills provide a potent example of this agency. Accommodationist Cherokee headmen wanted coexistence with their British allies and fair trade as much as other Indian groups in eastern America. Their undisputed command of the Tennessee country and military value allowed them to dictate the terms

of this alliance to an unusual degree. Powerful headmen such as Overhill leaders Little Carpenter and Old Hop used their advantages to negotiate a Cherokee-British frontier alliance that would satisfy their desire for fair trade, social status, and domestic security. If the Cherokees were the "Key to Carolina" described by South Carolina's governor James Glen, then a provincial fort near the headmen's village was the key to maintaining the alliance. Little Carpenter and Old Hop wielded a surprising level of control over almost every facet of Fort Loudoun's construction. But building Fort Loudoun was only the beginning. Unless the fort successfully answered the Cherokees' needs for trade regulation and fair treatment, it would only fuel the tempers of anti-British Cherokee nationalists. Fort Loudoun was built to capture powerful Cherokee leaders' hearts, but its failure to navigate the tricky waters of Cherokee village diplomacy helped lead to a general Indian uprising and its own downfall. The fort is best known for its violent destruction during the Cherokee War, but its construction and maintenance at the behest of Cherokee leaders and troubled tenure among the Overhills reveals better the complicated role English forts could play in Indian societies.

While Old Hop and Little Carpenter prodded South Carolina into giving them a manned fort, Pennsylvania's provincial government sought protection against new Delaware attacks on its northern frontier. Indians did not force the construction of Fort Allen or the defensive fort chain of which it was a part. The forts were a response to dangers posed to backcountry settlers and Northhampton County's towns. Fort Allen was raised on the site of one of the bloodiest raids of the Delaware-British conflict, the Moravian Indian village of Gnadenhütten. Once the posts were manned and settler communities were secured, Pennsylvania's provincial troops could proceed into Indian

country and punish belligerent Delaware groups. But though Indians did not influence Fort Allen's construction, they defined its use to a degree unexpected by Pennsylvania's officials. Throughout its short history, Indians stayed in and near Fort Allen, using their own traditional expectations to remake the fort into a place of native hospitality. The post became an Indian way-station, a diplomatic checkpoint, an alcohol-laden "tippeling house," and a trading post. Instead of keeping Pennsylvania's settlers free of Indian influence, the fort mandated an almost constant Delaware and Iroquois presence in the Blue Mountain region. Indians imposed their cultural traits on this tiny post and made Fort Allen a place of anxious hospitality instead of frontier protection.

Coexistence was the first instinct of many Indians, even when their new neighbors were despised enemies. This was apparent at Michilimackinac, the important trade depot that guarded the strait between Lakes Michigan and Huron. All of Michilimackinac's Ottawa and Ojibwa neighbors possessed longstanding ties to French soldiers and traders. They grated at the news that the French king had ceded this important point to the hated British at the close of the Seven Years' War. After first attacking and overcoming the fort at the straits, local natives accepted the inescapable reality of a British occupation. They then used their mastery of foodways to ensure their importance in the new British regime. Outside provisioning could not supply all the demands of the post until well after the American Revolution, and substantial British garrisons relied on their neighbors to supply them with food. By keeping the peace and helping the Michilimackinac garrison, Indians reinvigorated their trade, which had suffered during the Seven Years' War and the 1763 Indian uprising. Michilimackinac's commandants, traders, and commissaries provided rum to local natives for profit and as gifts. While this relationship lasted, through war and

peace, food and drink defined a system of social interdependence that challenges deterministic economic models of Indian decline. Hundreds of miles from any English town, in a place where snowfall is measured in meters, Ojibwas, Ottawas, British soldiers, and French *habitants* each brought their own contributions to the cultural mix. Only when the continuing British influx overstressed the local food system did the Indians' power in the interdependent Michilimackinac culture begin to decrease.

While Michilimackinac's Indians negotiated an interdependent relationship with their new British neighbors, Genesee Senecas living near the Niagara fort system settled for an uneasy coexistence. Genesee Indians occupied a geographic middle ground between the British (and their Iroquois allies) in New York and the French regime in Canada. For decades they had played the empires off each other to maintain equitable trade conditions and to retain their power in western New York and the Niagara corridor. With the loss of their French allies at the end of the Seven Years' War, the Genesee Senecas had to find ways to recreate their customary diplomatic balance. They found their opportunity during the Indian uprising of 1763, when they allied themselves with Ohio Valley and Great Lakes Indians in defiance of the new North American superpower. Fort Niagara's strength proved useless against the Senecas, who knew that the narrow portage around Niagara Falls was the most vital point in the entire Great Lakes communication system. In the space of a single year, the Genesee Senecas dealt the British their worst military defeat of the Indian uprising and then successfully negotiated their forgiveness by giving up territory that they had ceded to the British military command twice before. The Genesee Indians' violent actions have been interpreted in the past as simple exasperation over trade or outrage at losing a few hundred porting jobs at

Niagara. But their violence and humility were two parts of the same strategy. After France's defeat, they knew they would have to live with British neighbors, and like their counterparts at Michilimackinac they sought coexistence under the best terms they could manage. At the close of the Niagara peace conference in 1764, both Senecas and Britons felt they had reached an equitable concord, despite the appearance of a humiliating Seneca land cession. But as the British presence in the Niagara region increased during the late 1760s, the Senecas began to realize how far their influence in the region had already deteriorated.

Illinois experienced no such diminution of the uprising's tensions in the mid-1760s. The region's native groups knew that logistical problems and geographic unfamiliarity would hamper any British attempt to hold their newly won western holdings. Consequently, Indians resisted the notion of peaceful coexistence at Fort Chartres, the seat of British authority in the region, more than Indians in other parts of North America. Fort Chartres's personnel would have to impress Illinois's Indians and others visiting the fort with displays of their power and toughness if they wished to establish the idea of Britain's mastery of the West in the minds of resentful and rebellious natives. With the first arrival of British representatives at the huge French fort on (and sometimes *in*) the Mississippi, the contest of intimidation and manliness was on. But British troops would soon learn that without control over trade, familiarity with the physical and cultural terms of survival in the region, and sufficient material means to maintain the promise of British military might, they did not stand a chance. Unable to impress Indians at the westernmost edge of the empire, British commandants relied on continued use of the "French Maxim" of gift-giving to gain Indians' cooperation. But

Illinois and Wabash Indians viewed these exuberant displays of love and friendship as more evidence of British weakness. In Illinois, Indians did all the intimidating. Fort Chartres's unhappy commandants spent worrisome years suffering the threats and pandering to the demands of the native masters of the region, until the mission became too expensive and the fort literally fell into the muddy Mississippi waters. At Forts Loudoun, Allen, Michilimackinac, and Niagara, Indians glumly understood and accepted the British presence in their countries. At Fort Chartres, nothing could convince Indians that descendants of these hapless British occupiers would someday dominate the continent.

These five forts and their native visitors illustrate the complicated texture of backcountry cultural encounters and relations. They share several attributes. In each location, British authority is revealed as malleable and open to negotiation, despite the firm imperatives of provincial governments and Britain's American military command. Trade availability was a primary concern for Indians, but fairness and sound regulation emerge as more important factors. Indians held fort commandants responsible for managing disreputable traders. In each location, Indians expected their cultural practices to be followed, or at least respected. They also understood the trepidation with which British fort personnel held their French enemies, and used that fear to demand presents, gun and tool repairs, and interpreters to prevent trade inequities. In none of these cases did Indians feel that forts and military personnel endangered their lifeways or control of their territories. At worst, they feared that forts would bring civilian encroachment. Large armies such as John Bradstreet's punitive expedition into the Ohio Valley in 1764 caused much more native consternation than permanent posts, which Indians felt they could

overpower through attack or siege if necessary. Most importantly, Indians were involved in just about every aspect of fort operations: scouting, staging military operations, provisioning, diplomacy, and even fort planning and construction. Even at Fort Chartres, where Illinois and Wabash Indians did not fear or even respect the British regime, Indians were heavily involved in British fort life. In these five locations, and throughout North America, forts were Indian as well as European places.

Despite the occasional appearance of British incompetence and ineffectiveness, this study is not intended as a critique of the British fort system or military regime in North America. In Indian country, just as in Ireland, Africa, and India, British colonial outposts were implanted with multiple objectives. The first was to create a “mark of possession” in a remote and possibly hostile natural and cultural environment. But negotiation followed; especially in America, colonial conquest was a series of dialogical or multilogical puzzles that involved mutual understandings, revelatory misunderstandings, brash hauteur, and pragmatic solutions to unforeseen contingencies. In this sense, forts and garrisons could not conquer Indian country at all. They could only hope hold their positions long enough to negotiate agreements with their native neighbors before their military mission ended, bureaucrats withdrew their funds, or Indians ran out of patience. But the mark of a fort’s success was not always measured by how well its military might held a region for Britain or one of its colonies. In military posts from the Mississippi to the Susquehanna, success was often decided by how well British forts pleased Indians. Natives’ considerable agency in defining fort-based cultural relations and determining the means of life and death in the backcountry made them indispensable and unavoidable fixtures of everyday colonial military life. The wooden pales and

earthen breastworks of British backcountry forts did cast lasting shadows over the West, but for Indians the shadows blended with those cast by familiar trees and hills. As often as they plunged Indians into darkness, they occasionally gave them shade and comfort. Indians even treated forts as they did trees. They used them as points on the landscape, as shelter, and as providers of important material goods. And on occasion, if deemed rotten or incapable of supplying anything useful, forts could be toppled.

CHAPTER ONE

FORTS IN THEIR HEARTS:

Old Hop, Little Carpenter, and the Making of Fort Loudoun, 1756-1759

In July 1753, South Carolina's governor James Glen met with Cherokee and Creek emissaries to prevent further fighting between the two nations and to establish a firm alliance between his colony and prominent Cherokee leaders based in the Overhill town of Chota. This was the governor's first meeting with Little Carpenter, nephew and deputy of Overhill leader Old Hop, and their short conversation exemplified English-Cherokee parlance in the 1750s.¹ Little Carpenter opened by reminding Glen that he had met personally with King George II in London in 1730, and that the monarch had promised to supply the Cherokees with guns and ammunition to avenge themselves against all their enemies. If they were to quit fighting the Creeks, Little Carpenter insisted that the order must come from the king himself.

Glen suggested that Little Carpenter had forgotten the particulars of the 1730 treaty, and that the Cherokee leader should take Glen's words as "the great King's Talk." Little Carpenter refused, and asked to be allowed to travel to England and reaffirm the treaty with the king in person. Glen claimed that the Cherokees could not spare such a

¹English documents use the names Little Carpenter and Old Hop to refer to the Cherokees Attakullakulla and Connecorte, respectively. This study uses the English names to avoid confusion with material quoted from the original documents. Titles of entries in the South Carolina Indian Books use many variations of the two leaders' names. In these citations the English names are used instead, to avoid further confusion. For a biography of Little Carpenter, see James C. Kelley, "Notable Persons in Cherokee History: Attakullakulla," *Journal of Cherokee Studies* 3:1 (1978), 2-34.

great sachem in those dangerous times. "There are other Countries and Places to go to England from besides this," warned Little Carpenter, but Glen insisted that the king would never meet with the Indian emissary without his authorization. Little Carpenter immediately shut down the talk, telling Glen, "We can not do any Thing without the Consent of Old Hop." This was a surprise to Glen, who had organized the conference months before and assumed that Little Carpenter's delegation had been given full authority to negotiate peace. Glaring at the Cherokee leader, he fumed, "I have been 10 Years here and never saw this Man before." But Little Carpenter had established his status with the governor and, handing Glen a pipe sent by Old Hop, smoked with the South Carolinian delegation and continued the talks.²

Little Carpenter's meeting with Glen anticipated the style of negotiations that would dominate Cherokee-British relations throughout the 1750s. From the British perspective, the Cherokees were valuable allies, necessary to the vital deerskin trade and protectors of the exposed Virginia-Carolina backcountry. But Cherokee leaders did not intend to provide those services for free. Dependent on European trade goods by the middle of the eighteenth century, they needed British protection of trade routes and regulation of traders and prices. But they also fought to preserve their status among their own people and their influence and dignity in the face of British allies and European and Indian enemies. Little Carpenter pointed out to Glen that he was the governor's equal. He had met and treated with King George II, walked London's streets and parks, and wished to be acknowledged as the king's good servant. He reminded the governor that other

²Proceedings of the Council Concerning Indian Affairs," July 4, 1753, in *Documents Relating to Indian Affairs*. The Colonial Records of South Carolina. [Ser. 2: The Indian Books.], ed. William R. McDowell, Jr. (Columbia: South Carolina Archives Department, 1958-1970), 2:433-34 (hereafter cited as *DRLA*).

colonies and countries desired the Cherokees' favor as trading partners and military protectors. Finally, as a stalling tactic, he demonstrated the fractious and, to Britons, confusing nature of Cherokee village politics by feigning his insufficient authority to conclude diplomatic agreements. After bringing the governor down to his level, he and Glen continued to discuss trade from a position of strength and equanimity.

Cherokees dominated the Carolina backcountry in the eighteenth century, and despite their numbers and importance in the region their existence was fraught with anxiety. Already allied with the British and immersed in the European deerskin trade for three decades by the 1750s, the westernmost group of Cherokees in the Overhill region still felt isolated and threatened by the French and their Indian allies to the north and south. Cherokee leaders such as Little Carpenter and Old Hop knew that colonial governments desired backcountry forts to protect settler communities and trade, and thought that British forts in Cherokee country might also answer many of their own needs. Forts brought status and respect in the eyes of their French-allied enemies and other Cherokees living in the Lower and Middle regions. British garrisons could provide regulation of the skin trade and prevent the abuses of unscrupulous Indian traders. Outposts could also serve the social and material needs of Cherokee men and women by creating safe marts of commerce. Cherokee women especially desired new forts as places where they could sell surplus crops and handicrafts, and, in some cases, find husbands. Those Indian motives fit well within British colonial plans to fortify the backcountry.

Trader Edmond Atkin thought that to obtain permission for such fort building, British authorities needed to create favorable and fair trade practices with the Indians,

which he described as “building Forts in their hearts.”³ But Atkin may not have counted on the conceptual fortresses already guarding Cherokee ambitions. Defensive Overhill Cherokees, adjusting to life in a new Indian-European consumer economy and involved unhappily in European political entanglements, needed more than just physical bulwarks and sentries. To obtain true status among friends and foes alike, Cherokee leaders forced Europeans to build forts on Indians’ terms, in the places they chose, to guard their own goals and purposes. They used all the diplomatic means at their disposal to force the South Carolinians to build a fort in the Overhills according to their wishes. Eventually, Fort Loudoun’s failure to satisfy the Cherokee’s expectations led to its downfall.⁴

By the 1750s, the Cherokee Nation played a vital role in South Carolina’s expansion plans. Cherokees had established themselves as protectors of British backcountry interests during the Yamasee War in 1715, when a British-Cherokee alliance helped save Charlestown from possible destruction. Military cooperation and dramatic increases in trade revenues during the 1730s and 1740s made the Cherokees vital to the continued health and happiness of the province.⁵ Glen described the Cherokee nation as the “key to Carolina,” a “natural Fortification thrown around us, as a Bulwark to our

³Wilbur R. Jacobs, ed., *The Appalachian Indian Frontier: The Edmond Atkin Report and Plan of 1755* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), 40.

⁴Previous studies of the fort have taken into account the prodigious effort expended by Cherokee leaders to influence the construction of Fort Loudoun, but still maintain the prominence of perceived British motives to “control” the Cherokees. See James C. Kelley, “Fort Loudoun: British Stronghold in the Tennessee Country,” *East Tennessee Historical Society Publications*, 50 (1978): 72-91.

⁵Tom Hatley, *The Dividing Paths: Cherokees and South Carolinians Through the Era of the Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 67-71.

Backs.”⁶ He knew well that Cherokee friendship had been beneficial in the past, but he also knew the great danger that would ensue if they were to become enemies. The Cherokees were a large nation, “far more numerous than all the Six Nations together,” claimed Glen in 1755. Should they become enemies, they were well situated to attack the Carolina backcountry without fear of pursuit over the rugged mountains they called home.⁷

Construction of Fort Prince George near the Lower Cherokee town of Keowee in 1753 helped guard the passes from the South Carolina backcountry into the mountains, but trader Atkin, who would later serve as Indian Superintendent for the Southern District, knew that a single lower-country fort would be insufficient. If the English would not build an Overhill fort, he argued, the French inevitably would do so, and that would move the Cherokees closer to French interests and domination.⁸ Trader Ludovic Grant agreed, arguing to Glen that an Overhill fort would be as much an encouragement to the Cherokees in the mountains as Fort Prince George had been for the Lower towns. With the fort to protect their women and children, Cherokee men would be more likely to venture out against South Carolina’s enemies.⁹ If the Cherokees were the key to Carolina, an Overhill fort seemed to be the key to establishing a strong South Carolina-Cherokee alliance.

⁶Ibid., 71; Glen to the Board of Trade, Mar., 1751, William Henry Lyttelton Papers, William C. Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (hereafter cited as Lyttelton Papers).

⁷Glen to the Commons House of Assembly (hereafter CHA), Mar. 7, 1755, in *The Colonial Records of South Carolina: Journal of the Commons House of Assembly*, eds. J. H. Easterby, et al., (Columbia: Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1951), 12:157-59 (hereafter cited as *JCHA*).

⁸Jacobs, *Appalachian Indian Frontier*, 51; Atkin to Thomas Robinson, Aug. 29, 1755, Lyttelton Papers.

⁹Ludovic Grant to Glen, Aug. 20, 1755, *DRIA*, 1:74-75.

In order to achieve his diplomatic objective, Glen would have to win over the Overhill headmen, especially Old Hop and Little Carpenter, two emerging leaders seeking to maintain their status and authority in the face of constant challenges from within and without. For decades Cherokee numbers had been diminished by disease and war with the Creeks and other Indian groups in the region. But the structure of Cherokee village authority ensured that headmen faced challenges from their own people as well, especially young men who took a less diplomatic approach to European expansion. It was only by the acclimation of their own people that Old Hop and Little Carpenter maintained their positions and status, and that approval could be withdrawn at any time.¹⁰ This status anxiety made it necessary for headmen to temper their accommodation of English objectives with demands for English favors. For example, in an April 1752 talk addressing rumors that Cherokees were planning to attack English settlers, Old Hop started by establishing his status, claiming that despite his old age “he is much looked upon in this Nation.” He then assured the British delegation that he had notified all the Upper Towns “to be careful of the white People and not to hurt any of them.” He then left it to another Cherokee leader, Tacite, to relate the long “tedious” list of trade goods that would be required to ensure the Cherokees’ favor.¹¹ But even a respected elder diplomat like Old Hop faced suspicions from within. Little Carpenter himself later told Fort Loudoun’s commandant Raymond Demere that Old Hop would treat with anyone who brought him presents.¹² Another Cherokee later told Demere’s brother Paul that Old Hop was not to be trusted, and that while his speech seemed “very fair,” the “old Rogue”

¹⁰Hatley, *Dividing Paths*, 10-12.

¹¹Talk of Old Hop et al., Apr. 22, 1752, *DRIA*, 1:253-54.

¹²Raymond Demere to William Henry Lyttelton, July 30, 1757, *DRIA*, 2:392; Hatley, *Dividing Paths*, 11.

spoke with “two tongues.”¹³ Even with the benefit of age and wisdom, Old Hop needed to constantly reaffirm his status with Cherokees and Englishmen alike.

Little Carpenter possessed an advantage in his dealings with the British because he had met the king personally. In 1730 he was one of seven Cherokees who accompanied traveler Alexander Cuming to London to meet King George II and to be awed by the spectacle of one of the world’s largest cities. The delegation agreed to a treaty of perpetual friendship between the Cherokees and the English which was often cited in subsequent years.¹⁴ For example, Old Hop reminded Glen that when “his People was in England” they had personally talked with the king, that the agreement made with the king “was still in their Town House,” and that the king’s word ensured that the Cherokees “would always love the English as Brothers that sucked one Mother.”¹⁵ But Little Carpenter might have been the last of that delegation still alive in the 1750s, and he enjoyed reminding Glen and others that he had met, eaten with, and parleyed with the king. In 1753 he asked to see the true copy of the treaty given to him personally by “the great King George.” When Glen said he lacked the original, Little Carpenter insisted that it did not matter because he had committed “the great King’s Talk” to memory.¹⁶

¹³Paul Demere to Lyttelton, Jan. 1, 1759, Lyttelton Papers.

¹⁴The visit of the Cherokee embassy to London is described in Verner W. Crane, *The Southern Frontier, 1670-1732* (1928; repr., Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2004), 295-302. For a full study of Indian experiences in Britain, see Alden T. Vaughan, *Transatlantic Encounters: American Indians in Britain, 1500-1775* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), esp. 137-50 for a more recent description of the Cherokees’ London visit. Hatley emphasizes the persistence of the memory of the Yamasee War of 1715 in English-Cherokee relations, and views the London treaty as a solidification of the uncertain alliance promised after that conflict. Hatley, *Dividing Paths*, 67-68.

¹⁵Talk of Old Hop to Glen, Apr. 29, 1752, *DRIA*, 1:258-59; Ludovic Grant and Joseph Axson to Glen, Mar. 23, 1759, *DRIA*, 2:47-48.

¹⁶“Proceedings of the Council Concerning Indian Affairs,” *DRIA*, 1:439.

When William Henry Lyttelton succeeded Glen, Little Carpenter continued to emphasize his royal connections with the new governor. He told Lyttelton, "Tis been 26 Years since I was in England, but (I) still remember our Father King George's Talk and hope to hear from him by you."¹⁷ In July 1759 he told the governor that he knew the king must have given orders to provision the Cherokees, because when he was in London the king had promised to supply them with "every thing that would be necessary."¹⁸ Personal congress with the king was more than a bargaining tool for Little Carpenter. It conferred status on the Cherokee leader that few English people and only a handful of living Indians enjoyed.

Status and authority in the eyes of British leaders helped ensure continued and equitable trade, which by the 1750s had become a mainstay of Cherokee village life. Indians of the region were shrewd and practiced consumers and traders, and sought fair prices and quality goods from the traders who lived in their villages. If traders cheated them or offered substandard goods, Cherokees could travel to Virginia or North Carolina for better bargains, or deal covertly with French traders.¹⁹ But South Carolina's traders were the Indians' most direct source for their "necessaries," and the Cherokee headmen always sought to maintain strict regulation of trade and fair prices.

This was made difficult by frequent abuses by traders. Some would sell only liquor for deerskins because of alcohol's great profit potential, causing some Indians to

¹⁷Little Carpenter to Lyttelton, Aug. 15, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:166.

¹⁸Speech of Little Carpenter to Raymond Demere," July 13, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:137-38.

¹⁹Hatley, *Dividing Paths*, 43-44, 47-48. On Indian consumerism in general, see James Axtell, "The First Consumer Revolution," in *Beyond 1492: Encounters in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 125-51.

fall into poverty after having “drinked all their Skinns.”²⁰ Shortages of supplies, often imposed deliberately by traders to keep prices high, were frequent sources of conflict. Cherokees always encouraged colonial governors to license and send as many well-supplied traders as possible because the added competition would benefit the Indians. For example, Old Hop complained in October 1755 that only one trader, John Elliott, served the needs of the seven towns in his neighborhood and asked Glen to send others. Though Glen promised to find more traders to send, he reminded the Cherokee leader not to rely on credit, but to “pay for what you get,” in order to keep trade goods plentiful.²¹ Cherokees increasingly engulfed in a system of credit and consumer exchange required responsible on-the-spot oversight and regulation of trade.

Traders provided clothing, guns and ammunition, tools, body paint, and a long list of other trade mainstays by this time. But as necessary as the traders had become to the natives, they were also a source of resentment. In one instance, a Virginia trader, Richard Pearis, had attempted to sneak past Chota to avoid a Cherokee trade conference. He was headed to the town of Toquo for an assignation with an Indian woman there. When Old Hop learned that the trader meant to bypass Chota, he sent men to capture him and bring him in. Old Hop had heard that Pearis bore a letter for him from Glen, but Pearis told the old headman that the letter had been stolen.²² According to trader Ludovic Grant, who was present at the meeting, Old Hop proceeded to humiliate Pearis. “As he had brought no Letter nor was a Messenger,” Grant reported to Glen, Old Hop suggested that Pearis

²⁰James Beamer to Glen, Feb. 21, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:104-06; Old Hop to Raymond Demere, and Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, Aug. 3, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:157-61.

²¹Glen to Old Hop, and Old Hop to Glen, Oct. 14, 1755, *DRIA*, 2:77-79.

²²The letter had, in fact, been stolen by Cherokees sent by rival trader Nathaniel Gist, and had already been read to Old Hop. David H. Corkran, *The Cherokee Frontier: Conflict and Survival, 1740-62* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), 55-56.

“should only mind his Trade.” Because the trader had no goods with him “save Whiske, a spirituous Liquor it seems made of rye of which he had twenty Caggs,” Old Hop ordered him to leave the country. To further humiliate the trader, Old Hop revealed that he knew of the planned assignation. Since Pearis did not bear a letter to him from Glen, he asked if the governor “had sent any Message to his Woman,” and then compared the trader to “a young Buck in rutting time, who run hither and thither, not minding where, after a Doe till he found her.”²³ Many traders maintained long relationships with Indians in the region, including Grant, who traded for many decades among the Creeks, Catawbias, and Cherokees. But Cherokees were quick to complain about improprieties, and based their respect for traders on the amount and quality of goods or services they supplied and the equitable terms they offered.

Short supplies of goods were a frequent complaint against traders and English trade policy, but these shortcomings were compounded when traders deliberately cheated their Indian customers. Little Carpenter explained to Glen that traders used faulty weights and measures to swindle his people. Glen had sent the Indians measuring sticks and weights authorized by the Assembly, but the traders still found ways to cheat. “Do what we can, the white People will cheat us on our Weights and Measures, and make them less,” Little Carpenter complained. “What is it a Trader can not do? They cheat us in the Measure of our Powder. Some of the white Men borrowed my Yeard and cut it, and then gave it back for which I was blamed.”²⁴ Ludovic Grant confirmed these practices, and claimed that despite colonial statutes to regulate trade and measures, “there has not been one single Article observed by a Trader.” He described the traders’ use of “fals Stilliards”

²³Ludovic Grant to Glen, Mar. 27, 1755, *DRIA*, 2:40-45.

²⁴“Proceedings of the Council Concerning Indian Affairs,” *DRIA*, 1:442.

(scales), short Yards, and little Measures,” and noted that the official standard measuring devices sent upcountry for the Cherokees’ use often never arrived, “the Traders pretending they had no punctual Orders to carry them.”²⁵ Mankiller of Tellico, a Cherokee headman from one of the largest towns in the region, knew the value of trade goods and what he and his people should pay for them. He tried setting specific prices with Raymond Demere for everything from match coats to petticoats, and complained that traders greatly inflated prices and would “impose on them with their Stilliards,” which Mankiller hoped would be investigated because it was a serious source of discontent among his people.²⁶ Regulation of traders and their methods was a constant Cherokee demand and a necessary prerequisite to friendly Indian-English relations throughout North America.

In their efforts to maintain status and protect their people from belligerent enemies and unscrupulous traders, Overhill Cherokee leaders had long sought an expanded British presence in the region. Atkin reported that as early as 1746 Cherokee agents had asked that two forts be built in the Overhill region, “for the protection of their Families, and to enable them to keep out the French.” Cherokees would help build and garrison the forts, they promised, and provision it for two years. If this were done, the Cherokee agents argued, Indian relations would inevitably move favorably toward the English; if the French were able to build there first, “then every thing would be as *they* pleased.”²⁷

²⁵Grant to Glen, Mar. 27, 1755, *DRIA*, 2:41-42.

²⁶Talk of the Mankiller of Great Tellico to Raymond Demere, Jan. 15, 1757, *DRIA*, 2:320.

²⁷Jacobs, *Appalachian Indian Frontier*, 51. Emphasis is added by the author.

Glen had long argued in the South Carolina Assembly for an Overhill fort. At a conference in Saluda Old Town in the spring of 1755, he promised Little Carpenter and a large assembly of Cherokee headmen that he would build them one soon, in exchange for their cession of all Cherokee lands to the British.²⁸ Little Carpenter took Glen's promise seriously enough that throughout the following year he and his fellow sachems continually demanded immediate action on the project. They knew well how their numbers and mastery of their terrain impressed Glen, and they used it to induce the governor to build a fort quickly. "We expect that you will perform your Promise," warned Little Carpenter in October 1755, "But if you don't let us hear anything from you we shall think you have forgot us, and we shall have our own Thoughts."²⁹ Glen begged off as best he could, complaining that the king had not yet authorized the fort's construction and that he could not yet set a building date.³⁰ In fact, it was not the king or his provincial council standing in the way, but the province's Lower House of Assembly and the frightful cost of the proposed mountain outpost.

Funding the construction of a fort in the Overhill country brought the friendly competition between Virginia and South Carolina into the fore. Both colonies were eager to gain the Cherokees' help in protecting and facilitating trade in the backcountry and with military campaigns against the French and their Indian allies. In addition, George Washington's failed campaign in Pennsylvania and the outbreak of open hostilities with the French made the construction of a defensive fort in the Cherokee backcountry

²⁸Corkran, *Cherokee Frontier*, 58-61; Hatley, *Dividing Paths*, 75-77. Glen took the Cherokee land cession at face value, and disregarded the largely symbolic Indian perception of the exchange at Saluda.

²⁹Little Carpenter to Glen, *DRIA*, 2:77-78.

³⁰Glen to Little Carpenter, Oct. 14, 1755, *DRIA*, 2:75-76.

necessary, lest the French build outposts there first. To this end, the crown had in October 1754 appropriated £20,000 in credit and specie to Virginia's governor Robert Dinwiddie to form an expedition against the French and construct necessary defenses, and instructed him to assist South Carolina in constructing an Upper Cherokee fort as soon as possible.³¹

But Dinwiddie was willing to part with only £1,000 to help Glen with the project. In March 1755, the Committee on Indian Affairs in South Carolina's Upper House suggested that Glen appeal to the king and the governors of the surrounding colonies for more funds, and that South Carolina issue the necessary funds immediately and worry about reimbursement later. The Upper House agreed, but the Assembly did not see why their colony should bear the brunt of the expense. After all, they argued, Glen had promised them in 1751 that they would never be burdened with funding an Overhill fort, and they considered it "a matter of doubt" whether the Cherokees were even British subjects. Besides, they had just appropriated £5,000 the year before to build Fort Prince George, and balked at another huge capital outlay for a questionable enterprise hundreds of miles away in the mountains. Glen was disappointed, and so was Dinwiddie, who chided the South Carolina governor for his inability to fund the project despite South Carolina's professed "Oppulency and Riches."³²

After Glen's promises to the Cherokees at the Saluda conference, he tried again to extract funding for the proposed fort. He reminded the Assembly that "when a public & positive Promise is made to Indians, they are very impatient to have it perform'd." He

³¹Dinwiddie to Glen, Oct. 25, 1754, in *The Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie, Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Virginia, 1751-1758*, ed. R. A. Brock (1883; repr., Richmond: Virginia Historical Society, 1971), 1:379 (hereafter cited *Dinwiddie Records*).

³²"Committee on Indian Affairs Report," Mar. 12-13, 1755, Upper House of Assembly (hereafter UHA) to CHA, CHA to Glen, and CHA to UHA, Mar. 14, 1755, *JCHA*, 12:168-69, 181, 182-83, 183, 188; Dinwiddie to Glen, *Dinwiddie Records*, 2:26.

also noted that since the conference the Cherokees had sent letters “in very strong Terms” to discover the progress Glen was making in funding the project. “So eager were they to have a Fort,” Glen continued, that the Overhill leaders had commissioned a delegation led by Little Carpenter to travel to Charlestown to lobby for the fort’s construction. Glen again asked for immediate funding, and promised again that the king would reimburse it, but the Assembly still hesitated and asked for more documentation from the king and the Indians’ letters.³³

When Glen supplied the necessary paperwork, the Assembly assented to funding the fort, which they agreed should be “a Place of strength, & such an One as may be capable to defend our Allies, the Indians, & strike a Terror into our Enemies, the French.” But they still issued only an additional £1,000 for the project, despite continued urging from both Glen and Old Hop.³⁴ Glen argued that for a good, solid fort he would need £4,000 to £5000, but for an additional £1,000 he promised to construct “a regular Fort, with a good large Fasse³⁵, & a solid Rampart & Parapet.” As an example of the spectacular costs of constructing such a large project almost five hundred miles from Charlestown in the rugged mountainous terrain, he noted that just to obtain and transport sufficient flour for the project and to garrison the fort, the price could be as much as £6,000.³⁶ Finally, Glen borrowed £2,000 personally for the project and waited while the

³³ Glen to CHA, and CHA to Glen, Jan. 23, 1756, *JCHA*, 13:46-47, 48.

³⁴ *JCHA*, 13:78-79, 91-92; Old Hop to Glen, Mar. 20, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:108-09.

³⁵ A fosse, or surrounding ditch.

³⁶ Glen to CHA, Apr. 8-9, 1756, *JCHA*, 13:206-07, 210-11.

Assembly argued over passage of a tax bill.³⁷ Only after the accession of Glen's replacement, William Henry Lyttelton, did the Assembly agree to provide £3,000 for the Overhill fort without promise of reimbursement, but instead as an outright gift from the colony to the crown.³⁸

While South Carolina's governor and Assembly negotiated terms for building the new fort, Cherokees used the animosity and competition between Virginia and South Carolina to hurry the project along. In September 1755 several Cherokee representatives led by one of Old Hop's sons met with Dinwiddie in Williamsburg to give reasons why they had failed to send men to join in General Edward Braddock's failed expedition that summer. They told the Virginia governor that they had fully intended to, but were stopped by a letter from Glen urging them to meet with him at the Congaree trading post instead. Dinwiddie was furious, and accused Glen of never seriously pressing the Indians at Saluda to aid the Virginia expedition.³⁹

At that point Dinwiddie needed Cherokee military aid desperately, and over the ensuing months he decided to take the fort project on himself. He placed the blame for Cherokee intransigence on Glen's inability to fund the project, and feared that the Indians would join the French if the fort were not built that summer.⁴⁰ "The Cherokees propose send'g in 600 Men, if we build them a Fort in the Upper Cherokee Co'try," he promised George Washington, and announced that he planned to send Major Andrew Lewis and

³⁷*JCHA*, 13:xxviii, 247, 251. For an overview of James Glen's prominent role in negotiating the construction of the Overhill fort, see Stuart Stumpf, "James Glen, Cherokee Diplomacy, and the Construction of an Overhill Fort," *East Tennessee Historical Society Publications* 50 (1978): 21-30.

³⁸Lyttelton to CHA, and CHA to Lyttelton, June 30, 1756, *JCHA*, 13:263, 266.

³⁹"Minutes of a Council with the Cherokees," Sep. 5, 1755, and Dinwiddie to Glen, Sep. 25, 1755, *Dinwiddie Records*, 2:187-88, 215.

⁴⁰Dinwiddie to Arthur Dobbs, Apr. 13, 1756, *Dinwiddie Records*, 2:382.

sixty men to Chota immediately to build the fort.⁴¹ Dinwiddie instructed Lewis to tell the Cherokees that Virginians were building them a fort to protect their women and children while their men went to war, and the governor clearly expected the Cherokees' help in planning and constructing the fort. "They will assist You with their young Men," Dinwiddie told Lewis, and ordered him to leave behind a small cannon and garrison if the Indians so desired, though he hoped that the South Carolinians would arrive and supply those if necessary.⁴² Dinwiddie's hopes of success against the French depended fully on Cherokee aid, and he despaired that without the help of the Overhill men the Virginia provincial troops would "not be able to defeat the Enemy, who are chiefly Ind[ian]'s."⁴³

By June 1756 the South Carolina fort expedition began staging at Fort Prince George, and the party's commander Captain Raymond Demere promised the Overhill headmen that he would lead his men to Chota soon to begin building the fort.⁴⁴ Old Hop and Little Carpenter lost no time in sending word that the Virginians had beaten South Carolina to the punch. "The Virginia People promised us a Fort the other Day and are now here a building it," the Cherokee leaders wrote to Demere, and urged him to quickly send his company up and begin building a separate fort.⁴⁵

Demere understood the Cherokees' nuance of a promise made and kept by the Virginians as a rebuke to the South Carolinians for their delays, and so did Lyttelton. Old Hop wrote the governor to tell him that the Cherokees and the Virginians lived at Chota

⁴¹Dinwiddie to Washington, Apr. 23, 1756, *Dinwiddie Records*, 2:388.

⁴²Dinwiddie to Lewis, Apr. 24, 1756, and Dinwiddie to William Shirley, Apr. 28, 1756, *Dinwiddie Records*, 2:389-90, 395-96.

⁴³Dinwiddie to Lewis, Apr. 28, 1756, *Dinwiddie Records*, 2:393-94.

⁴⁴Lyttelton to Old Hop, June 3, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:115-16; Talk of Raymond Demere to Old Hop and Little Carpenter, June 30, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:128-29.

⁴⁵Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, July 2, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:129-34; Old Hop and Little Carpenter to Raymond Demere, July 12, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:134.

as loyal subjects of King George, “together as Brothers” and asked Lyttelton for one hundred men from Virginia and the same from South Carolina, “no more nor no less,” to garrison the fort, though he also promised that Cherokee men would help them if any enemies showed up.⁴⁶ This request surprised Dinwiddie, who hoped that Lewis’s Chota fort alone would spur an immediate outpouring of Cherokee military help, and that Lewis’s vital company would be able to return to Virginia soon. “We never tho’t of send’g a Garrison to it as it is so great a Distance,” Dinwiddie wrote Lyttelton, but he promised to put it before his Assembly immediately and to send a few men in the meantime.⁴⁷ “Every Thing sho’d be done to keep ‘em in good Temper,” Dinwiddie told North Carolina’s governor Arthur Dobbs, and proposed that once the South Carolinians’ completed their fort, that each colony should send a twenty-five men garrison.⁴⁸ In gaining the Cherokees’ help in their war with France, the colonies would have to supply more than logs and bulwarks.

Andrew Lewis understood better than the colonial governors the extent to which the Cherokees influenced Virginia’s fort project. When he suggested to the Chota headmen that South Carolina and Virginia combine their efforts to build one substantial fort, the chiefs would not hear of it. As Lewis told Demere, “they insisted on our Building them a fort at Chota and told me that they had Layed off a Spot (for) the Carolina People to Build another, and to Satisfy them I was obliged to Comply.” The Cherokees also induced Lewis to ask Demere for more powder and shot, and Demere

⁴⁶Old Hop to Lyttelton, July 2, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:141-42.

⁴⁷Dinwiddie to Lyttelton, Sep. 18, 1756, *Dinwiddie Records*, 2:510.

⁴⁸Dinwiddie to Dobbs, Sep. 18, 1756, *Dinwiddie Records*, 2:511-12.

granted the request after hesitating initially because his own supplies were low.⁴⁹ Overhill Cherokee leaders knew that the Virginians and Carolinians needed them, and insisted on determining the number and locations of posts built near their villages.

Cherokee headmen would not budge in their demands for two Overhills forts, and used their value as military allies to get what they wanted. Despite Lewis's best efforts to enlist Overhill warriors for Virginia's campaigns, Cherokee men preferred staying home until the fort was garrisoned. In addition, Dinwiddie complained that a few Cherokee men who had been in Virginia had stolen livestock from settlers on their way home. Little Carpenter was not pleased by the accusation, and wondered if Dinwiddie complained "of the few Men that were in Virginia pray what might he expect from the great Number he wants." Little Carpenter also requested more guns, ammunition, and trade goods, and apparently told Dinwiddie that if the Cherokees could not have them, "they should be obliged to tell the White People to leave their Nation they being of no Service to them."⁵⁰ Old Hop was even more direct, telling Dinwiddie that if they did not send trade and a garrison for the fort, it would be a sign that the Virginians did not value them as allies. He also told Dinwiddie that the French threatened to occupy the empty Chota fort, and he promised to hold the governor responsible. "If we should get hurt by the French," he warned Dinwiddie, "I shall Lay all Blame on you for Ever, for This is the second time I have sent to you about it."⁵¹ Virginia's Overhills fort was clearly not having the effect Dinwiddie desired.

⁴⁹Lewis to Raymond Demere, July 7, 1756, Raymond Demere to Lewis, July 17, 1756, and Raymond Demere to Lewis, Aug. 7, 1756, Lyttelton Papers.

⁵⁰Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, July 19, 1756, *DRLA*, 2:143-45. The quotes are Demere's, describing Little Carpenter's letter to Dinwiddie.

⁵¹Old Hop and Little Carpenter to Dinwiddie, Aug. 23, 1756, Lyttelton Papers.

While the Virginians worked to ease Cherokee disappointments, the South Carolinians faced their own pressures. Since early June when the fort expedition left Charlestown for Fort Prince George, rumors had sent ripples of fear through the backcountry.⁵² Fort Prince George's commander Thomas Harrison started the rumor mill grinding. "Some Days past we had a great Talk," Harrison wrote Lt. William Shrubshoal, commander of the expedition, "The Indians was going to kill all the White People, but I think it is over for this Time and when you come it will give a great deal of Easiness to the Indians which really are Friends to the English." He noted that there were certainly many younger Cherokees who might wish to attack the British, but he remained confident that they could be kept in check through "Fear of the few which will not agree to it."⁵³

Four days later he was not so sure. Harrison wrote again to Shrubshoal to report daily rumors that Indians intended to kill all whites in Cherokee country, and that only Old Hop and five others stood against rebellion. Apparently some Indians had spread a rumor that the fort expedition actually intended to kill all the Cherokee men in the region and to enslave the women and children. Little Carpenter suggested that Lyttelton himself come to Keowee to assure the young men that the English were their friends and would protect them. Ominously, Harrison reported that Cherokee messengers had been sent to

⁵²Gregory Evans Dowd has shown how rumors of Indian activities affected Indian-English policy in Cherokee country, and how they must be accounted for in writing those histories today. Separated by hundreds of miles controlled by Indians whose loyalties were always a matter of speculation for the South Carolinians in Charlestown, communication between the Overhill region and the colonial capital was infused with often-uncorroborated claims of intended Indian depredations that were often exaggerated or spun of whole cloth. However, the effects of the rumors on those who listened to them were real enough, and usually played a role in the mutual distrust and cautiousness that colored the Cherokee-British alliance in the late 1750s. See Gregory Evans Dowd, "The Panic of 1751: The Significance of Rumors on the South Carolina-Cherokee Frontier," *WMQ*, 3rd ser. 53:3 (July 1996): 527-60.

⁵³Harrison to Shrubshoal, June 2, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:116-17.

Chota to discover Old Hop's sentiments. If the old leader gave the order, the Indians near Keowee would kill all the white people in Fort Prince George, a post so inconsequential and easy to besiege that the Cherokees regarded it as "nothing."⁵⁴ Seemingly not all Cherokees desired an Overhill fort or an expanded English presence in the region, and even Old Hop, the most assiduous fort proponent, might have had his doubts.

Despite the grim warnings of Cherokee disaffection, Demere's arrival at Fort Prince George offered him plenty of evidence that Cherokees desired forts for their own purposes. Upon his arrival, he experienced the bountiful hospitality that Cherokee women customarily bestowed upon visitors. Three hundred Cherokees from both Keowee and the Middle towns performed a "formal ceremony" that consisted of feasting and a dance given by the "Ladies of the Town." As Demere would discover later, Cherokee women had good reason to welcome the Carolinians. British garrisons and forts offered them ready markets for surplus corn. As part of the welcoming ceremony at Fort Prince George, Keowee's women lavished presents upon Demere in a great showing of their food production capabilities as well as their generosity. In return for some "refreshment" that Demere had sent to their town the day before, the women gave him "a great Number of Cakes of Bread of their own make and green Peas and Squashes," despite their apparent lack of provisions.⁵⁵ Demere quickly learned that the Cherokees at Keowee would soon solve their provision shortage when the corn crop came in. Corn grew in great abundance near Keowee. Demere noted that the garrison of Fort Prince George had produced 700-800 bushels the previous year, and expected to exceed that amount in the

⁵⁴Harrison to Shrubshoal, June 6, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:117-18.

⁵⁵Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, June 23, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:125-26.

fall.⁵⁶ Indian women hoped that the busy men at the new Overhills fort would not be as productive, at least in the beginning, and would be happy to purchase their corn surpluses. Demere later found that Indian women would be indispensable to the success of his fort, and that the fort offered women attractive social possibilities.⁵⁷

Contrary to reports of imminent Indian aggression, Demere and his men found no hostile Cherokees at Fort Prince George, only some “old stayed men” from the Lower villages who promised to serve Governor Lyttelton and answer all the king’s requests.⁵⁸ After the welcoming celebration was over, the fort party began consolidating the food and materials that they would need to lug over the mountains, while curious Indians prodded them for information. On July 12 an Overhill delegation including Little Carpenter and the brother of Oconostota, the Great Warrior, arrived at the fort to ascertain the expedition’s progress. Demere noted happily that they did not seem interested in talking business, but instead “only great Compliments did pass from either Side.”⁵⁹ The Indians regretted that they could not meet with Lyttelton in Charlestown, as both Demere and the governor had requested, because traveling was too difficult in the summertime and they preferred to stay at Keowee to observe the expedition’s preparations.⁶⁰

On July 20, Little Carpenter decided that the time for compliments was over. He assembled some of his chiefs and demanded to know when Demere would proceed to the

⁵⁶Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, June 24, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:127.

⁵⁷On Cherokee women and vegetable production, including their views on trade and hospitality, see Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 72-74.

⁵⁸Answer of the Cherokee Chiefs to Raymond Demere, June 20, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:124.

⁵⁹Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, July 13, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:136.

⁶⁰Speech of Little Carpenter to Raymond Demere, July 13, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:137.

Overhills, and seemed satisfied to learn that the expedition would set out in a few days. He also suggested that the fort be built near his own town, Tomatly, which was only a couple of miles from Chota.⁶¹ But the next day Little Carpenter and his chiefs returned and demanded that the force proceed at once. When Demere told him he thought the issue had been settled already, Little Carpenter flew into a rage, calling Demere a “great Lyar” and characterizing the English captain as more a “little Boy” than a potent warrior. Demere believed the abrupt change stemmed from an old grudge (James Glen’s broken promise to supply Little Carpenter with rum), but he was not taking any chances. He ordered his men under arms, and that seemed to satisfy Little Carpenter for the moment.⁶²

Demere hoped that Little Carpenter’s hostile behavior was an isolated personal outburst rather than a serious indication of Cherokee frustration, and not without some justification. On July 25 Little Carpenter returned and apologized to Demere, blaming the outburst on rum. “I take him to have a great deal of Deceit in him even when sober,” Demere wrote to Lyttelton, adding that Cherokees at Keowee worried about Little Carpenter’s behavior “when in Drink.”⁶³ But Little Carpenter’s frustration may have been a serious indication of Cherokee fear and mistrust rather than an intoxicated impropriety. Old Hop apparently shared his nephew’s impatience with the expedition’s lack of progress, and began to take steps to hurry Demere along. On August 3 he informed Demere that an Overhill Cherokee hunting party had encountered an enormous party of

⁶¹Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, July 20, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:145-46.

⁶²Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, July 21, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:146-47.

⁶³Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, July 25, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:147-48.

enemy Savannah Indians in the area.⁶⁴ Demere concluded that this alarm was deliberately designed to frighten and spur on the fort expedition.⁶⁵

When Demere's surveying group arrived at Tomatly, they confirmed that Old Hop intended to frighten the English into action and to play off South Carolinians against Virginians. The old chief told Sergeant William Gibbs, commander of the survey party, that he was disappointed that construction of the Carolina fort had not yet begun and that he bet it would never be built.⁶⁶ The party found little evidence of Savannah incursions into the Overhill towns, despite Old Hop's continued warnings that they continually stirred up trouble among the Creeks and Choctaws.⁶⁷ The old chief wrote to Dinwiddie that "the Carolina Men ... have promised us a great many Things but we cannot find one Word of Truth in any thing they say or promise us," knowing full well that the accusation would migrate back to Lyttelton.⁶⁸ By August 28 Old Hop was furious at the lack of progress, and sent word to Demere that he regarded the captain's continued promises as "nothing but Lies."⁶⁹

Demere continued to offer a number of excuses for not proceeding to the Overhills, including a lack of reinforcements for Fort Prince George and a dearth of provisions, but others felt that Cherokee manipulation might have been a cause. Engineer William Gerard De Brahm, who had been lured from his job as surveyor general of Georgia to plan and build the Overhill fort, claimed that Indians and traders worked to

⁶⁴"Paper Signed by Captain Raymond Demere," Aug. 3, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:158.

⁶⁵Demere consulted the report's bearer, Tiftoa, who told him that the large body of Indians were in actuality French-allied Nottowagoes and that Old Hop always received the Savannahs as friends. *Ibid.*

⁶⁶Gibbs to Raymond Demere, Aug. 6, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:163.

⁶⁷Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, Aug. 11, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:161-62.

⁶⁸Old Hop to Dinwiddie, Aug. 15, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:167-68.

⁶⁹Cherokee Headmen to Raymond Demere, Aug. 28, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:182.

capitalize on English insecurities. "Every Day is another Day appointed to set off, Every Traider & pack horse man has his peculiar Friend among the Indians, of whom he brings great and bad new intelligences," the engineer informed Lyttelton, "After which the Indians are ask'd to give there Ta[l]ks, which are taken as memorandum, Sent Down to Town, Your Excellency, ye Council & publick Set in uneasiness." He claimed that these rumors were "but inventions and compositions of old & new histories mixt together" and served no purpose "but to get a Caske of Rum or Some Shearts."⁷⁰

Meanwhile, Old Hop continued his plan to frighten the English into action. On September 9 he supposedly sent a letter to the headmen of Keowee asking if the garrison of Fort Prince George had "used them and their Women ill" and had barred them from trading at the fort. Demere told Lyttelton that the people of Keowee remained perfectly happy with the garrison, and he feared that Old Hop had begun to "embrace the French interest" and was trying to lay the groundwork for a Cherokee rebellion.⁷¹ Andrew Lewis, nearing his completion of the Chota fort, also feared that Little Carpenter sought an uprising. The promised Cherokee help to Virginia had still not materialized, and Lewis suspected that Little Carpenter may have been involved in French plans to build a fort near Great Tellico. "Little Carpenter, who has the ruleing of this Nation, is a great Villain and will do every thing in his Power to serve the French," Lewis wrote to Lyttelton, confirming British fears even as De Brahm sought to debunk them.⁷²

When Demere finally arrived at Tomatly on October 1 he received a friendly reception from Old Hop, surrounded by two hundred Cherokees in full regalia. The old

⁷⁰DeBrahm to Lyttelton, Sep. 7, 1756, Lyttelton Papers.

⁷¹Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, Sep. 9, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:197-98.

⁷²Lewis to Raymond Demere, Sep. 11, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:203-04; Lewis to Lyttelton, Sep. 14, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:205.

chief was enthusiastic about the arrival of the fort expedition, and hoped “that all the bad Talks and every thing that was passed might be forgot and remembered no more.”

Demere finally understood part of their frustration with British delays: The Overhill Cherokees had fallen into a state of genuine and fearful poverty, “very poor and all naked,” according to Demere, and he understood why they would “embrace any Proposal made to them to get Relief.”⁷³ But after the initial diplomatic presentation of Cherokee goodwill, Old Hop returned to matters of business. He promised to comply with any of the king’s and the new governor’s wishes, and seemed happy at the change in government in South Carolina, since his “friend” Glen’s promises for a fort had turned out to be “nothing but Lies.” Old Hop then spoke of his desires regarding “his” forts. “I have one Fort at Chote,” he told Demere, referring to the still unmanned Virginia fort. “I want another one here,” he asked, “Then do you fix on a Spot to build one for yourself that a Gun being fired at one may alarm all three.”⁷⁴ Demere had no authority or intention to build any other forts, but he welcomed Old Hop’s promises of help after months of rumors and threats. He even induced Old Hop to confess to sending people to talk with French-allied Indians, though the old Cherokee claimed unconvincingly that he “did not

⁷³Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, Oct. 13, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:216. Descriptions of Indian poverty by both European and native observers often describe such “nakedness” and starvation, and while this was often a figurative conception of the Indians’ condition, stressing their desires for comparative levels of status and authority, the descriptions must have been at least partially true given the verifiable Indian hardships evident throughout Eastern North America in the eighteenth century. In English sources such as this report by Demere, the descriptions of poverty seem real enough, and this is not surprising considering the extent to which Indians had begun to rely on trade, the interruptions in commerce brought on by the conflict with France, and the remoteness of the Overhill region. On Indian descriptions of nakedness and poverty as reflections of status anxiety, see Hatley, *Dividing Paths*, 10.

⁷⁴Reply of Old Hop to Raymond Demere, Oct. 3, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:224.

do it with any Intent to hurt the Carolinians, or the Virginians.”⁷⁵ But Demere was even more impressed with Little Carpenter’s promises to prevent the French from building at Great Tellico or anywhere else among the Overhills. “He has got at this present Time more Power and Influence over the Indians than Old Hopp,” Demere claimed, and he hoped that with the headman’s help the fort could be built quickly.

Old Hop and Little Carpenter further established their authority by deciding the final location of the fort. On October 4 they accompanied Demere and De Brahm to examine the engineer’s chosen site, which was one mile farther from Tomatly than surveyed previously.⁷⁶ Demere thought the engineer’s change in location was “more for Contradiction’s sake than any Thing else,” but he and the two Cherokees humored the temperamental engineer. Old Hop and Little Carpenter argued against the new location immediately. It was “almost a desert” without good planting ground for corn, they insisted, and they knew it to be frequented by “lurking” enemies. But their main objection was that it was too far away from their towns to be of any use. When De Brahm insisted on the location because of its strategic position at a fork in the Tennessee River the Cherokee leaders denied this advantage, claiming that only insignificant canoes could navigate the river safely. Demere agreed gently with the Cherokee position that the ground was too sandy for the garrison to plant corn, and suggested that they should try to keep the Indians happy, though he still left the decision up to De Brahm. Angered at the captain’s implicit preference for the Indians’ input, De Brahm handed his pistol to Demere and asked him to “shoot him through the Head” if he would not listen to expert

⁷⁵Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, Oct. 16, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:225.

⁷⁶Glen had sent a surveyor to Tomatly in February 1756 to check out available conditions for a fort and to confer with Little Carpenter to decide upon a good site. Glen to Little Carpenter, Feb. 17, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:99-100.

advice. Demere suggested that the engineer “blow up his own Brains himself” if he so wished. This display alarmed the two Cherokees, who had endured De Brahm patiently but had finally had enough. They demanded outright that the fort be built at the original location near Tomatly, and after more “discussion” the engineer consented. Old Hop knew how to behave diplomatically, but he and Little Carpenter would not consent to have “their” fort built in a place that would not serve their needs for protection and status. Old Hop had a fort near his town, and Little Carpenter required one just as close to Tomatly.⁷⁷

De Brahm’s conduct of the fort’s construction, which began on October 4 right after the location argument, can only have increased Cherokee anxieties about the value of their alliance with the British. On the one hand, De Brahm went right to work, issuing stern commands regarding the conduct of Demere’s soldier-workers and not even allowing them time to build adequate shelters.⁷⁸ However, despite early progress on the fort, the engineer’s mercurial management style caused morale to drop quickly. “He fanceys himself a verry great Monarch and wants the whole Command to himself,” complained Demere. Apparently De Brahm had hoped to win an appointment as Surveyor General of South Carolina. When this did not materialize, he became insolent and threatened to return to Georgia, “where he should be thank’d for his Service.”⁷⁹ By November the strain had begun to show in the lack of progress on the fort. Soldiers still

⁷⁷Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, Oct. 13, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:217-18. De Brahm’s description of the argument over the fort’s location is somewhat different, and makes it seem as though the Indians bowed to his better judgment. [William Gerard] *De Brahm’s Report of the General Survey in the Southern District of North America*, ed. Louis De Vorsey, Jr. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971), 101-02.

⁷⁸Raymond Demere to De Brahm, Oct. 14, 1756, Lyttelton Papers.

⁷⁹Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, Oct. 26, 1756, Lyttelton Papers.

had not been allowed to construct houses for themselves, while De Brahm had moved into an Indian house in Tomatly after hearing of a possible French attack on their camp.⁸⁰

The dispute between Demere and De Brahm became more heated with the arrival of winter. When the engineer decided that the fort was nearly complete, he tried to turn the provincial troops' sympathies away from Demere and almost provoked a mutiny.⁸¹ As for the fort, Demere professed his astonishment at the lack of progress. "Can you call this a fort, no Guns or Platforms, no Barracks, no Guard, no necessary Houses or Drains so requisite for the Health of the Garrison, no Houses for the Officers, but miserable Hovels built at their own Expences ... in short Nothing as yet to be seen deserving the Name of a Fort," Demere complained after De Brahm declared his job complete, left instructions for finishing the fort, and deserted the operation.⁸² With the project's two principle British representatives locked in combat over the fort's progress, the Cherokee headmen were less than enthusiastic.

Earlier in October, with Demere and De Brahm at loggerheads and the fort project stalled, Old Hop had taken matters into his own hands. He told Demere that Indians from Great Tellico, the largest Overhill town, had been among the French eliciting support for an attack on the Tomatly camp by French, Creek, Choctaw, and Savannah forces, and that the new fort must be made defensible immediately. Demere ordered De Brahm to finish the palisades, and for once the engineer agreed and set to work.⁸³ Though these rumors were grounded in reality, they also reflected Old Hop's fears of losing his health,

⁸⁰Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, Nov. 18, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:248-51.

⁸¹Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, Dec. 16, 1756, and "Council of War," *DRIA*, 2:274-75.

⁸²Demere and Other Officers to De Brahm, Dec. 23, 1756, and Demere to Lyttelton, Dec. 24, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:287-90.

⁸³Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, Oct. 28 and Nov. 7, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:232-34, 241.

status, and influence over the young men. The old headman believed that he would soon die, and told Demere to trust only the Great Warrior of Chota and his brother.

Surprisingly he did not recommend any of his many sons or any other headmen, including his nephews Little Carpenter and Willanawa, because he did not know how they would “behave” after his passing.⁸⁴

Old Hop may have been warning Demere about actual divisions rising amongst his people regarding the British alliance, but his immediate purpose was to encourage Demere to finish the fort quickly and prepare for trouble. By late November the Cherokees had little to show for their negotiations with the South Carolinians and Virginians except an unmanned fort at Chota and De Brahm’s watery, unfinished mess at Tomatly. No additional traders had come to supply them, and the renewed alliance with Britain only increased their danger. When Andrew Lewis returned to Williamsburg, he took only seven Cherokee fighting men, far fewer than the one hundred warriors Little Carpenter and Old Hop had promised Dinwiddie. The governor told them angrily that he suspected the French had induced them to renege on their treaty. Unfazed, the Cherokees promised to send more men once Virginia garrisoned the Chota fort.⁸⁵ As later events showed, the Overhill Cherokees were perfectly willing to help their British allies, but they knew that to do so before they had the forts and garrisons they had requested would display weakness before allies and enemies alike.

To make matters worse for Overhill leaders, they were probably facing pressure from another group they could not afford to disregard or disappoint. Cherokee women

⁸⁴Old Hop to Raymond Demere, Oct. 28, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:234-37.

⁸⁵“Dinwiddie’s Message to the Cherokee Indians,” Nov. 14, 1756, *Dinwiddie Records*, 2:548-49; Dinwiddie to Lyttelton, Nov. 20, 1756, *Dinwiddie Records*, 2:555-56.

wanted the new forts and garrisons as protection for their families and crops, but the forts would also provide them with small amounts of income. Provisioning a fort in the mountains had always been a source of concern, and the Carolinians had intended from the beginning to buy food from Indians until the garrison could produce their own.⁸⁶ By January 1757, Demere had become convinced that Indian provisioning would have to sustain the fort for a while. He had been able to procure only five canoe loads of corn to get the fort builders through the winter and was forced to send an "Indian Wench" off with several wagons to buy all the corn she could find. It is not unusual that Indian women would be experts at buying corn, even if they did it infrequently. Crops and home economy were a woman's responsibility, and women knew how to make the most of their opportunities. Because Cherokees desired trade goods, both necessities and "trifling Things," they would charge as much as they could for their crops. "We are obliged to pay very dearly for Corn," Demere complained to Lyttelton, adding that because traders brought "no Goods proper for the purchasing of Corn," women selling it only wished for the goods he and his men had brought with them.⁸⁷ Until more traders came to the

⁸⁶Glen to Little Carpenter, Feb. 17, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:99-100; Lyttelton to Old Hop, June 3, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:116.

⁸⁷Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, Jan. 2 and Jan. 6, 1757, *DRIA*, 2:303; 310; Talk of the Mankiller of Great Tellico to Raymond Demere, Feb. 6, 1757, *DRIA*, 2:333. Cherokee women also made baskets of renowned quality, though by the mid-eighteenth century this commodity had decreased in importance and Indian women usually sold them through intermediary traders. Perdue, *Cherokee Women*, 74-75. Cherokee women were shrewd consumers, and put pressure on their men to maintain peaceful relations with the provinces and ensure a healthy trade. "Their Women are so much used to our Commodities, Ribbands, Paint, etc. that they soon feel the want of it," an officer at Fort Prince George wrote to General Gage in 1764, "That contributed by all Accounts as much at least to the last Peace with the Cherokees as the Burning of their Towns." Augustine Prevost to Gage, May 20, 1764, Gage Papers AS, vol. 15.

Overhills region to trade for skins, Cherokee women would have to depend on the new fort and its garrison for the goods they needed.

Some Cherokee women depended on the fort for more than economic benefits. As soon as the garrison settled itself at Tomatley, some native women married soldiers. On both sides this was not unusual. Traders and Indian agents had long valued native wives, especially since being adopted by an Indian family gave white men special opportunities for trade and diplomacy. The benefits for Cherokee women were also substantial. As the wives of traders and soldiers, Cherokee women could become important cultural go-betweens and increase their own level of status. Children of such intermarriages remained Cherokees, because kinship was determined by matrilineal succession. Such children often grew to become influential in both white and native societies, increasing the value of intermarriage for Cherokee women and their kin. But these were not merely marriages of convenience or practicality. Cherokee women often sided with their soldier-husbands against their own leaders, providing Demere with reliable intelligence and bringing food to the fort when provisions were low or threatened. British forts and personnel sometimes offered levels of social autonomy and economic security to Cherokee women that were unattainable in their own society.⁸⁸

Internequine Cherokee animosities created yet another problem for the fort project. Overhill headmen had argued for a fort near their homes partly because of their competition with the Keowee people after Fort Prince George's construction. With new forts guarding Chota and Tomatly, jealousy among leaders from other Upper towns was predictable. In November Demere learned that Mankiller and others from Great Tellico

⁸⁸Perdue, *Cherokee Women*, 82-84, 100-01.

had visited the French at Fort Toulouse on the Alabama River, and rumors spread that the Tellico people had agreed to abandon their town and move to Hiwassee Old Town, where the French planned to build a new fort.⁸⁹ When Demere confronted Mankiller in December, the Tellico headman convinced him that Old Hop and Little Carpenter had ordered him to go, and that when he met with the French, he still had “Old Hop’s Commission,” a string of beads, hanging from his neck. Demere delighted that Mankiller, a man who had “been always disaffected to the English,” had been so easily brought over to the British interests.⁹⁰

Subsequently, Demere was sorely disappointed to hear in January that some of Tellico’s people had indeed moved to Hiwassee.⁹¹ Lt. Robert Wall went to Tellico to investigate, and met there with a “throng” of Indians still living in the town and eager for trade. Wall gave them presents sent by Demere and promised that trade would soon return to the village.⁹² Meanwhile at Chota, Old Hop and Great Warrior eagerly pressed Demere for information about what had transpired with Mankiller. He told them he would placate the Tellico people with presents, but that he would never again reward the “very deceitful Villain” Mankiller.⁹³ When Wall reported back, he confirmed that as long as trade goods were in such a short supply in Tellico and nearby villages, “those Towns will always be uneasy and dissatisfied.”⁹⁴ Mankiller confirmed this, making it clear to

⁸⁹“Intelligence from Captain Demere,” *DRIA*, 2:243-44; Old Warrior of Tomatly to Raymond Demere, Nov. 13, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:244-45.

⁹⁰Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, Dec. 11, 1756, *DRIA*, 2:267-68.

⁹¹Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, Jan. 2, 1756, *DRIA*, 301-05.

⁹²Talk of Wall to the Tellico Indians, Jan. 11, 1757, *DRIA*, 2:317-19.

⁹³Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, Jan. 12, 1757, *DRIA*, 2:311-13.

⁹⁴Wall to Raymond Demere, Jan. 13, 1757, *DRIA*, 2:321-24.

Demere that until a regular trader came to Tellico, he would have nothing more to say to the English.⁹⁵

By January 1757 Cherokees began to learn how much their aspirations for an expanded British military presence among them would interfere with their own goals rather than encourage them. James Glen and other fort proponents had always stressed that maintaining good relations with key Cherokees was reason enough to fortify the backcountry, but with the onset of the Seven Years' War, Britain needed Indian allies for their military campaigns. Fort Loudoun, as the Overhill fort would soon be named, represented an extension of British military policy in the remote mountainous region. Indians there who hoped for increased trade, better regulation of traders, and more status and authority among their own people would have to take on British motives along with their own. This involved promises of Cherokee participation in far-flung military ventures, like the 1758 Forbes campaign in Pennsylvania, but provincial war policies also infused British-Cherokee relations in the Overhills. Fort Loudoun and the policies that accompanied it quickly became more trouble than they were worth for Overhill leaders.

Cherokees would not readily fight nearby French soldiers and their Indian allies without pay, and enemy scalps soon joined woven baskets and deer skins as hot commodities in the Overhill towns. At the end of January 1757 Demere had little with which to impress the Cherokees. Fort Loudoun had been hastily palisaded after De Brahm's abrupt desertion and cannot have been a very attractive inducement to Cherokee cooperation. With trade goods sparse in the region, Demere turned to direct payment for Cherokee participation in the war. "Nothing is more valuable amongst brave Men and

⁹⁵Talk of Mankiller of Great Tellico to Demere, Jan. 15, 1757, *DRIA*, 2:319-20.

Warriours than Trophies of Victory,” he told the headmen at Chota, “Nothing is more worthy Acceptance than the Scalps of our Enemies; I want some and hope that some of you will soon bring me some French Scalps, or some Indian Scalps that are in Friendship with the French.” He promised to give the equivalent value of thirty pounds of leather in exchange for each scalp.⁹⁶

South Carolina’s Assembly supported the scalp bounty initiative. They agreed to defray the cost of “a Gun, one Pound Powder, three Pounds of Bullets, a Matchcoat, a Blanket, a Flap, a Check Shirt, a laced Hat, a Knife & two Ounces of Vermillion” for each enemy scalp brought in from remote areas. Even larger rewards would be granted for killing enemy interlopers in the Cherokee towns themselves.⁹⁷ Scalp bounties were nothing new in British North America, but the increased use of them among the Cherokees led to trouble almost immediately. In August a group of young Cherokee men brought in five scalps to Fort Loudoun, supposedly taken from enemy Savannahs, and asked for their reward. Little Carpenter knew immediately that the scalps were from friendly Chickasaws, and warned that the error was likely to cause trouble with longtime friends.⁹⁸ He blamed the new English policy for causing the mistake. “I can think of nothing that induced them to do this Action, but their hurry to return home to receive the reward,” he complained to Demere, upset that a group of upstanding young men had

⁹⁶Talk of Raymond Demere to Old Hop and the Upper Cherokee Headmen, Jan. 25, 1757, *DRIA*, 2:331-33. On the prevalence and uses of scalp bounties for colonial purposes, see James Axtell, “Scalping: The Ethnohistory of a Moral Question,” in *The European and the Indian*, 215-23.

⁹⁷Lyttelton to CHA, Feb. 3, 1757, *JCHA*, 13:321; *JCHA*, 13:325-26.

⁹⁸Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, Aug. 26, 1757, *DRIA*, 2:404-05.

“returned like Thiefs With a Lye in their Mouths.” He asked Demere to stop the scalp bounties immediately. His Cherokees preferred open and honest trade to blood rewards.⁹⁹

With most of the Seven Years’ War action far away from the smoky hills of Cherokee country, Demere looked for any opportunity to make his fort, his garrison, and his Cherokee allies useful. In June 1757 he found an opportunity. Beneath constant rumors of French-Cherokee machinations swirling through the Overhills, Demere heard that seven French-allied Savannahs had been seen visiting Tellico. Demere told Old Hop, the Standing Turkey, and other Cherokee headmen that killing the Savannahs would prove conclusively their allegiance to the king. Old Hop wondered skeptically why Demere thought seven Savannahs represented such a dire threat, and the captain replied that they were enough to start with. The headmen resisted creating such a provocation. Old Hop liked to keep his options open with the French, and did not wish to endanger anyone at Tellico. He asked if they might wait and kill the conspirators after they left town.

While the headmen retired overnight to think about the proposal, Demere remained adamant that the Savannahs be killed “some Way or other,” and organized a party composed of provincial volunteers and two Indians to attack the enemy. They succeeded in killing three of the seven Savannahs, much to Demere’s delight.¹⁰⁰ “The Blow is now given,” he proclaimed to Lyttelton, sure that the Cherokees’ participation in the raid would force them into an open war with the French-allied Savannahs.¹⁰¹ He publicly rewarded the two Cherokees, making their friends regret not joining the party

⁹⁹Summary of Talks of Old Hop, Little Carpenter, and Paul Demere, Aug. 30, 1757, Lyttelton Papers.

¹⁰⁰Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, June 10, 1757, *DRIA*, 2:381-83.

¹⁰¹Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, June 13, 1757, *DRIA*, 2:383-86.

and receiving bounties. But the Overhill headmen did not like being forced into such a confrontation by Demere, who they had hoped would bring more trade goods to the region rather than increased bloodshed. Demere finally convinced Old Hop, Standing Turkey, and their fellow headman, the Smallpox Conjuror, to agree that the killings were justified, but only after bribing them with new matchcoats and promises of more ammunition and trade goods for their towns. Still, Demere's rash action did nothing to allay Cherokee disappointments, and worsened relations with the Savannahs and Tellico.¹⁰²

At the bottom of Cherokee disaffection was the issue of trade, which the headmen had hoped would be improved by an official South Carolina presence in the region. On February 5 Old Hop angrily accused the British of reneging on their 1755 Saluda agreement. South Carolina had built them a fort and manned it with a garrison, but traders still charged prices far above those to which Glen had agreed, making Old Hop regard Charlestown's promises as "Nothing but Lies." He was particularly upset about Chota's trader John Elliot, whom Demere agreed sold goods at a "most exorbitant Price."¹⁰³ A week later Old Hop apologized for his anger, but argued that his people would make poor bulwarks against the French without decent guns and ammunition. Demere agreed, knowing that the Cherokees' guns were old and in bad repair, and he told Lyttelton that Old Hop could hardly be expected to "send his People to fight with their Fists."¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² John Stuart to Lyttelton, June 12, 1757, Lyttelton Papers.

¹⁰³ Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, Feb. 5, 1757, *DRIA*, 2:333-35.

¹⁰⁴ Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, Feb. 15, 1757, *DRIA*, 2:338-40.

But Cherokees could not wait for Lyttelton to act, and used all the advantages they possessed to improve trade practices. Fort Loudoun's garrison needed Indian-produced corn to augment their provisions, and Cherokees forced Fort Loudoun's commissary John Chevilletto to make the traders offer good trading terms and prices in exchange for food.¹⁰⁵ The Cherokees also knew that the British feared a French-Cherokee alliance above all, and they reminded Demere and other British authorities that the French had always promised them an abundance of trade.¹⁰⁶ Those fears only increased when proof of a late-1756 French-Cherokee agreement emerged. In April 1757, "Articles of Peace and Friendship concluded between the French Governor (of Louisiana) & certain Deputies from the Cherokee Nation" were found aboard a captured French merchant ship, the *Revanche*. Lyttelton hurriedly urged the Assembly to enforce strong trade regulations, "as may remove, as far as possible, all cause of Discontent in the Minds of the Indians."¹⁰⁷

Fort Loudoun's presence did as little to instill ethical practices among backcountry traders as it did to enforce fair prices, which further exacerbated Cherokee tempers. In July 1757 Little Carpenter asked that John Elliot be recalled from the Overhills. He had never stopped cheating Indians with faulty weights and measures, and refused to bring sufficient amounts of goods to the towns, which caused "so many Talks" among the Cherokees and was a direct source of their disaffection. Little Carpenter told Demere outright that without trade improvements they would soon be forced to resort to "the French at Tuskegee" and that the quicker Lyttelton corrected the situation the less

¹⁰⁵Chevilletto to Lyttelton, Mar. 1, 1757, *DRIA*, 2:344.

¹⁰⁶Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, Apr. 1, 1757, *DRIA*, 2:357-59.

¹⁰⁷Lyttelton to CHA, Apr. 1, 1757, *DRIA*, 2:402; *DRIA*, 2:413, 422.

his people would plot and complain.¹⁰⁸ Indian poverty forced the headmen to insist on speedy progress in trade matters, but status and conspicuous consumption also played a role. At a Fort Loudoun meeting with Elliot and Demere, Cherokee headmen complained that “the Creeks does Laugh at em for being not well Supplied with them as they are them selves.”¹⁰⁹ Their animosity with Elliot was not personal, and Little Carpenter and Old Hop agreed to give him the benefit of the doubt if he would start bringing the arms and supplies they needed instead of more rum and flour.

In August 1757 Paul Demere replaced his brother Raymond as commander of Fort Loudoun, but complaints about trade continued. The new commandant reminded Cherokee leaders that French-allied Choctaws and Savannahs complained constantly of their treatment, and that Cherokees had never obtained anything from the French but promises.¹¹⁰ He urged patience with Elliot, and Overhill leaders had little choice but to complain and hope for the best, hating the abuse of their trade but afraid to lose their only trader. Those complaints increased for the next two years as John Elliot continued using faulty measures, watering down his rum, and charging prices that ensured Cherokee poverty.¹¹¹

With Fort Loudoun failing to provide the economic relief Cherokees expected, new rumors of Indian schemes began to fly throughout the region. In April 1757 Indian Superintendent Edmond Atkin told Lyttelton that Cherokees had attacked western Virginia settlements. He further suspected that Little Carpenter had become Britain’s

¹⁰⁸Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, July 11, 1757, Lyttelton Papers.

¹⁰⁹Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, July 23, 1757, Lyttelton Papers.

¹¹⁰Talk of Paul Demere to the Indians at Fort Loudoun, Aug. 25, 1757, Lyttelton Papers.

¹¹¹Paul Demere to Lyttelton, Feb. 20, 1758 and Sep. 30, 1758, Lyttelton Papers.

“Secret Enemy” and had concluded an alliance with the French-allied Shawnees.¹¹²

Indian agent John Stuart also reported a “visible Alteration in the Behaviour of the Indians” after Little Carpenter returned from a visit to Charlestown, but he assured Lyttelton that the headman remained firmly attached to British interests and maintained his status among the Overhill Cherokees.¹¹³ Next month a new rumor emerged that involved a Nottawagoe-Cherokee alliance to attack Fort Loudoun from without and within and to kill the entire garrison.¹¹⁴ In August Paul Demere remained convinced that Old Hop and the Tellico people remained the fort’s greatest threat, but he assured Lyttelton that “Little Carpenter and a great many other Head Men are as good Friends and Wellwishers as we can expect.”¹¹⁵

Demere’s mistrust of Old Hop may or may not have been misplaced, but it is understandable given the old leader’s continual manipulations of Cherokee-British relations and his assertions of authority. For example, in July 1757 Old Hop had forced Raymond Demere to purchase one of his slaves, “a French Deserter that has been Some time in this Nation & his own Property.” Demere did so, fearing that if he refused, Old Hop would “throw him in the River for the fish to eat.”¹¹⁶ Old Hop needed to reaffirm his power and influence over Demere, especially in the increasingly unsure political arena of the Overhills, with French agents and anti-British Cherokee nativists vying for position with the old chief and his people. But such loyalty tests only added increased British doubts about Old Hop’s influence and reliability. With official opinions about Old Hop’s

¹¹²Atkin to Lyttelton, Apr. 30, 1757, Lyttelton Papers.

¹¹³Stuart to Lyttelton, May 29, 1757, Lyttelton Papers.

¹¹⁴Daniel Pepper to Raymond Demere, June 27, 1757, *DRIA*, 2:390.

¹¹⁵Paul Demere to Lyttelton, Aug. 18, 1757, *DRIA*, 2:401-04.

¹¹⁶Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, July 11, 1757, Lyttelton Papers.

and Little Carpenter's loyalties shifting constantly, Fort Loudoun's situation grew increasingly precarious.

Reports of possible Cherokee plots came amidst other unsettling news at Fort Loudoun. Little Carpenter reported in July 1757 that the French had built a new fort on the Savannah River. When Raymond Demere offered to send to Charlestown for help, Little Carpenter felt they should act immediately because "Things are Generally too Long before they are Determined in Carolina," and he proposed a general Carolinian attack.¹¹⁷ Demere then learned that Old Hop had been conspiring at Chota with French John, a trader in league with the Creeks and Savannahs. Little Carpenter sought to dispel Demere's distrust of the old chief, saying the "old fool" would listen to anyone "that brought him a small String of Beads." Not knowing if his Cherokee allies would protect him or thwart him, Demere was relieved when fifteen Cherokees brought in a French scalp taken near Fort Toulouse because he thought it would provoke his long-anticipated Cherokee-French war.

But the commandant could not disregard French John, a known French ally treating with headmen practically under the fort's walls.¹¹⁸ Demere put a bounty on him equal to five hundred pounds of leather, but killing the conspirator would be a delicate matter because he was under Old Hop's protection. When the trader learned about the bounty and ran off to Tellico for protection, Demere tried to contract the Mankiller's help. Mankiller agreed to kill French John and his friend Savannah Tom in secret within twenty days.¹¹⁹ Amidst the general confusion created by Demere's meddling, Savannah

¹¹⁷Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, July 9, 1757, Lyttelton Papers.

¹¹⁸Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, July 30, 1757, *DRIA*, 2:391-96.

¹¹⁹Raymond Demere to Lyttelton, Aug. 10, 1757, *DRIA*, 2:396-401.

Tom allegedly killed a white woman at Tellico. This finally prompted Cherokee declarations of war with the Savannahs, a convenient victory for Demere, but a tragedy for the Overhill people.¹²⁰ In less than one year, Raymond Demere and the policies he represented had disrupted relations between Overhill towns, contracted Cherokee headmen to act as covert assassins, and drawn the Cherokees into European conflicts they would have preferred to avoid.

Disappointed though the Overhill leaders may have been, their new promises to oppose the French still provided an excellent opportunity for presents. In October 1757 Little Carpenter prepared to set out with a small party to destroy the new French fort on the Savannah. Paul Demere was dismayed at the headman's requests for guns, hatchets, ammunition, and war paint, but he could do nothing but comply after his brother had urged them on for so long. Demere reported being "tormented" on a daily basis with Indian requests for gifts of food and repairs for their guns, hatchets, and tools.¹²¹ Little Carpenter and Old Hop were happy to learn in December that a store was planned for Chota and all the Overhill towns would be supplied, including Tellico, despite their recent fraternizing with the French.¹²²

But new Cherokee campaigns against the French would increase the demand for scalp bounties dramatically. In January 1758 Little Carpenter's party took fifteen French scalps, and the headman wrote to Demere to put in his order: "I hope you will have white Shirts made ready against we come. Make them large. Our Paint is gone. Please send to me two Pounds of Paint by the Bearer and four Bottles of Rum. I hope you have kept four

¹²⁰Talk of Wallanawa, Oct. 9, 1757, Lyttelton Papers.

¹²¹Paul Demere to Lyttelton, Oct. 11, 1757, Lyttelton Papers.

¹²²Lyttelton to Paul Demere, Dec. 15, 1757, Lyttelton's Letterbook Commencing in 1757, Lyttelton Papers, 57-58 (hereafter cited as Lyttelton Letterbook).

Keggs of Rum.”¹²³ With dozens of Cherokees pledged to Forbes’s spring campaign, the demands would only increase. “They expect to be entairten’d when they go to War, and when they come back, and Every time they come to give a Talk in the Fort, and on other Meeting,” despaired Demere, who had no choice but to accede because he was “on the Spot” and knew the dangerous consequences for refusing.¹²⁴ By April Cherokees had sent men north to help the Virginians, and a huge force prepared to set out against the French to the south. Demere depleted his stores outfitting the Cherokee parties, and feared that when they returned he would have no goods to give them.¹²⁵

Inability to maintain sufficient supplies of trade goods and constant warfare strained relations between the Overhill Cherokees and the men at Fort Loudoun throughout 1758. As young Cherokees agitated against British authority, their leaders began refusing promised help and feigning lack of authority in order to hedge against uncertain outcomes. In March Little Carpenter refused a request from Lyttelton to bring a French prisoner to Charlestown because “the young Man was not willing,” and the Overhill leader insisted that he would “never force his Inclination” on another.¹²⁶ The following month Old Hop refused to help Demere capture a trader, Samuel Jarron, who was wanted for an unnamed crime, either sedition or conspiring by letter with the French. “He has done Nothing but writing,” complained Old Hop, and since Jarron had lived among them for many years, the Cherokees considered him a relative and would not give him up.¹²⁷ In June Old Hop and Standing Turkey refused a reward of three hundred

¹²³ Little Carpenter to Paul Demere, Jan. 4, 1758, *DRIA*, 2:434-35.

¹²⁴ Paul Demere to Lyttelton, Mar. 2, 1758, Lyttelton Papers.

¹²⁵ Paul Demere to Lyttelton, Apr. 2, 1758, *DRIA*, 2:455-56.

¹²⁶ Paul Demere to Lyttelton, Mar. 7, 1758, *DRIA*, 2:439-40.

¹²⁷ Paul Demere to Lyttelton, Apr. 2, 1758, *DRIA*, 2:455-56.

pounds of leather to send men after two deserters, claiming that the fugitives “had too much the start,” and that “the Path was too Bloody and dreadful.”¹²⁸

When Lyttelton accused Overhill Cherokees from Settico of attacking settlers in Halifax and Bedford counties, Old Hop protested his helplessness in the matter. “I told them ... to be kind to the White People,” he insisted, “But some will be Rogues, and we have too many amongst us, Especially the lower Towns.” When Demere reminded him that Overhill Settico people had taken part in the attacks, he denied any influence over them. “What can I do?” Old Hop shrugged, and claimed that since most of his people wished only to hear anti-British lies, he had lost his authority over them because he would tell them only the truth.¹²⁹ As Old Hop knew very well, Virginian and South Carolinian authorities could do nothing but forgive unfriendly Cherokee actions.¹³⁰ Fort Loudoun had not altered the Cherokee-British balance of power among the Overhills at all, and its failure to supply Cherokee needs only helped to weaken the older Indian leaders’ status and influence and to encourage anti-British nativist sentiments.

Over the following year Paul Demere’s influence with Overhill leaders diminished as new reports of Cherokee disaffection in the region made Fort Loudoun more a lightning rod for dissatisfaction than a beacon of hope. Some of this may have been caused by Demere himself, whom Little Carpenter claimed was “not so attentive to the Indians & so kind to them” as his brother Raymond had been.¹³¹ More tension resulted from Lyttelton’s unfair efforts to brand Little Carpenter a deserter for quitting

¹²⁸Paul Demere to Lyttelton, June 24, 1758, Lyttelton Papers.

¹²⁹Lyttelton to Paul Demere, July 5, 1757, Lyttelton Letterbook, 148-50; Paul Demere to Lyttelton, July 30, 1758, Lyttelton Papers.

¹³⁰Lyttelton to Old Hop, Little Carpenter, Standing Turkey, and Woolinawa, Aug. 28, 1758, Lyttelton Letterbook, 207-08.

¹³¹Lyttelton to Paul Demere, May 2, 1759, Lyttelton Letterbook, 341.

the Forbes expedition without leave, an action well within Cherokee fighting traditions.¹³² But by early 1759 British-Cherokee relations had already deteriorated beyond the control or influence of Fort Loudoun. In April 1759 Cherokees of Settico, eager to avenge earlier deaths at the hands of Virginia settlers, raided settlements in western North Carolina, killing dozens of settlers and spreading fear throughout the backcountry.¹³³ Lyttelton's plan to use Cherokees as foot soldiers in a general southern campaign changed as a frightened South Carolina populace demanded that the government control their Indian allies. Lyttelton ordered trade suspended at Settico in August 1759, and stopped sales of arms to the Overhills altogether.

For Indians already dissatisfied with trade and always in need of ammunition and guns for hunting, this was a giant step backwards in their relations with the colonies. But Lyttelton cared little for Cherokee complaints because he had already decided that only a military confrontation could compel the Cherokees to meet their treaty obligations. Ignoring a last-minute Cherokee peace delegation to Charlestown in September, Lyttelton declared the Cherokees to be in open rebellion, sent letters to all surrounding colonial governors and the headmen of the Chickasaws, Creeks, and Catawbias, and prepared South Carolina for open war with the Cherokee Nation. This was an outcome few had expected.¹³⁴

¹³²Lyttelton to Paul Demere, Feb. 2 and Mar. 20, 1759, Lyttelton Letterbook, 206-07, 315; Hatley, *Dividing Paths*, 102.

¹³³Corkran, *Cherokee Frontier*, 168. Settlers had killed Settico Cherokees returning home from fighting as British allies in the Forbes campaign as they passed through the backcountry. Hatley, *Dividing Paths*, 100-01.

¹³⁴Corkran, *Cherokee Frontier*, 168-90; Hatley, *Dividing Paths*, 107-15. Lyttelton's warnings of the onset of hostilities are in the Lyttelton Letterbook.

Fort Loudoun would eventually meet its end at the Cherokees' hands in August 1760 when they besieged the fort and forced its capitulation, despite Little Carpenter's efforts at moderation. Indian wives of British soldiers showed great courage in sneaking food into the fort and arguing for leniency, but to little avail. As for Old Hop, by then his shifting loyalties no longer mattered. The old headman had succumbed to disease earlier that year, and nativists led by Standing Turkey and the Great Warrior of Chota held authority in the Overhill region. After the garrison's surrender, Cherokees killed Paul Demere and thirty-two of the fort's men, and enslaved or adopted the rest.¹³⁵

But the making of the fort revealed as much about the Cherokees' lives and desires as did the fort's breaking during the Cherokee-British War. Cherokee leaders desperately wanted forts near their towns to regulate trade and conspicuously define their status among Indians and Europeans alike. They exercised their influence to have forts built on sites of their choice, where they would serve Cherokee interests best. They knew that Glen was right to characterize them as the key to South Carolina's success, and they understood that the colonists needed them more than they needed the Virginians or the Carolinians.

Contrary to Cherokee expectations, allowing forts in their country also brought British military operations and expansionist policies closer to home. Cherokee headmen finally realized their desire for a British Overhill fort, but then they had to live with it. The result was increased tension between pro-French nativists and pro-British moderates among their own people, and conflicts with ever-encroaching Europeans on the colonial

¹³⁵Corkran, *Cherokee Frontier*, 216-21; Hatley, *Dividing Paths*, 133; Perdue, *Cherokee Women*, 100. For a detailed account of the surrender of Fort Loudoun and the fate of its garrison, see Richard G. Stone, Jr., "Captain Paul Demere at Fort Loudoun, 1757-1760," *East Tennessee Historical Society Publications* 41 (1969): 30-32.

frontier. Native American dispossession should seldom, if ever, be seen as the Indians' own fault, especially when their leaders tried their best to navigate the waters of the new Indian-European world to their peoples' best advantage. But the making of Fort Loudoun is as good an example as any to show that people should choose their wishes carefully.

CHAPTER TWO

ANXIOUS HOSPITALITY: Loitering at Fort Allen, 1756-1761

Of the many occupations Benjamin Franklin held during his storied life, one of the less acclaimed was that of a frontier fort builder. Franklin's contributions to philosophy, politics, and science are so significant that his contribution to the dirty work of defending Pennsylvania during the Delaware War has slipped past many of his biographers. But given the unexpected developments at Franklin's Fort Allen, it is fitting that it was designed and built by such an enigmatic individual. Intended as part of a chain of defensive outposts to protect Pennsylvania's towns and cities from Indian attack, Franklin's small fort became a diplomatic way-station, a drunken watering hole, and a moderately successful trading post. In fact, the fort became many things, but never really fulfilled its original purpose in Pennsylvania's frontier defense plans. Instead of protecting Pennsylvania's people and property, the fort became a source of confusion and anxiety for its Indian and European neighbors.

Most of the anxiety caused by Fort Allen's brief existence on the northern slope of the Blue Mountains stemmed from its frequent Indian guests. Situated at a vital passage through the mountains, the fort was sure to attract Indian passers-by. But the fort was also well situated for Indian diplomatic visits to the nearby towns of Easton, Reading, and Bethlehem. Indians visiting the fort for such purposes expected the full hospitality of the garrison and commandant, as they would of any host throughout Indian

country. Fort Allen's role as an Indian diplomatic checkpoint and resting place replaced its original role as a frontier base for punitive expeditions against belligerent Delawares. With hundreds of Indians visiting each year, and with a garrison that never exceeded one hundred men, it is understandable that Indians came to define the identity and nature of the small wooden stockade. Meant to reassure local settlers and to bring stability to the liminal space that existed between Indian country and British Pennsylvania, Fort Allen became an enigma. Instead of preventing Indians from troubling the Blue Mountain region, it attracted them. Instead of regulating unscrupulous British traders, the fort brought them a ready, native customer base. Fort Allen became as much an Indian place as an English one, where the most famous resident was not Franklin or some other provincial celebrity, but the renowned Delaware chief Teedyuscung. Colonial anxieties merged with Indian notions of hospitality and reciprocal obligation at Fort Allen, producing a place of anxious hospitality for both Europeans and Indians.¹

It is not surprising that Pennsylvania's Indians would expect hospitality in a fort built to defend the province against native interlopers. Hospitality toward visitors was a

¹Fort Allen has received scant historical attention as a cultural contact point. The most complete description of the fort's history is William A. Hunter, *Forts on the Pennsylvania Frontier, 1753-1758* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1960), 233-59. See also Charles Morse Stolz's valuable illustrations and description in *Outposts of the War for Empire: The French and English in Western Pennsylvania: Their Armies, Their Forts, Their People, 1749-1764*, 2d ed. (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005), 106-07. For descriptions of the political and social contexts in which Fort Allen was built, see Anthony F. C. Wallace, *King of the Delawares: Teedyuscung, 1700-1763*, 2nd ed. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1990); Matthew C. Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry*, 92-122; Ralph M. Ketcham, "Conscience, War and Politics in Pennsylvania, 1755-1757," *WMQ*, 3rd ser. 20:3 (July 1963): 416-39; Louis M. Waddell, "Defending the Long Perimeter: Forts on the Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia Frontier, 1755-1765," *Pennsylvania History* 62:2 (1995): 171-95; R. S. Stephenson, "Pennsylvania Provincial Soldiers in the Seven Years' War," *Pennsylvania History* 62:2 (1995): 196-213.

fundamental fixture of Eastern Woodland Indian life. Throughout eastern North America, Indians felt obligated to extend generosity to their guests, and friendly visitors expected polite treatment when visiting allies or kin. This type of reciprocal social exchange exemplified native life. It helped prevent destructive conflicts between native groups, and made traveling far from home bearable. This level of hospitality was sure to create friction when tested against less patient Europeans. When Indians made extended visits to European towns and forts, their hosts sometimes complained, to other Europeans at least, about native "loitering." Indians would have found such frustration with the length of a guest's stay disrespectful and possibly offensive.

French missionaries commented on Indians' effusive, and sometimes impractical, extension of generous cordiality, and hoped it could be harnessed as a conduit for teaching Christian virtues. Claude Allouez reported that hospitality was a common moral virtue among Indians he had encountered in New France. As an example, he noted an instance when Indians of the la Prairie mission near Montreal unexpectedly hosted over 800 friends, and used up their whole two-year supply of corn, "giving the strangers a warm reception."² Francesco Bressani agreed, and claimed that hospitality was so common among Indians that it was not considered a virtue, just a standard feature of life. He remarked that Hurons would receive any visitor, "never driving him from the hut, but serving him and giving him whatever he needed just as to the most intimate members of the household, without asking any pay for it."³ Paul Rageuneau elaborated on this facet of Huron life, especially in times of war or during mass population displacements: "Seven

² Rueben Gold Thwaites, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791* (Cleveland: Burrows Brothers, 1896-1901), 58:79 (hereafter cited as *JR*).

³ *JR*, 38:267.

or eight hundred persons, would find, from the time of their arrival, benevolent hosts, who stretched out to them their arms, and assisted them with joy: who would even divide among them a share in lands already sown, in order that they might be able to live, although in a foreign country, as in their own.”⁴ Missionaries had every reason to emphasize Christian-like virtues among potential converts in their relations to superiors in France, and their descriptions of native hospitality glow with proselytizing idealism. But to Indians, hospitality was simply a rational function of their reciprocity-based social interactions. Expecting hospitable treatment from friends, kin, and allies, and being willing to supply it, was necessary for survival.

In Pennsylvania, hospitality was planted firmly in Indian culture. When Europeans arrived in Pennsylvania, Delawares extended them all the favors they would have bestowed on well-known friends. In fact, this instinctive generosity led to their ceding lands easily to the newcomers, without fully understanding the permanent nature of European land tenure.⁵ Moravian missionary David Zeisberger experienced Delaware hospitality personally. He wrote, “It is recognized as a duty to care for the wants of a guest as long as he may choose to remain and even to give him provisions for the journey when he does make up his mind to go.” Food was always provided immediately to weary travelers. Zeisberger observed, “If the guests are from a distance and are very good friends, the whole kettle of food is set before them, they are given dishes and spoons and

⁴JR, 35:207-09.

⁵C. A. Weslager, *The Delaware Indians: A History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1972), 51; , Paul A. W. Wallace, *Indians in Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1964), 129; James H. Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), 137-43.

allowed to help themselves first to as much as they wish.”⁶ Zeisberger’s friend John Heckewelder noted that on “more than one hundred instances” he had experienced such effusive hospitality and that it was not reserved exclusively for Indian guests: “A person is never left standing, there are seats for all; and if a dozen should follow each other in succession, all are provided with seats, and the stranger, if a white person, with the best.” Heckewelder also insisted that these favors were given out of a sense of social responsibility, and that hosts would expect the same treatment themselves. But reciprocity did not imply a *quid pro quo* relationship, according to Heckewelder:

I have seen a number of instances in which a return was out of the question, where poverty would not admit of it, or distance of abode put it out of the power of the visitor to return the same civilities to his host; when white people are treated in this way, with the best entertainment the house affords, they may be sure it is nothing else than a mark of respect paid to them, and that the attentions they receive do not proceed from any interested view.⁷

Hospitable treatment became doubly important when guests were diplomats.

Before European contact, Indians did not fight wars or enter into conflicts they did not expect to end through negotiation. Given small Indian populations in the Eastern Woodlands region and the harsh dictates of the natural environment, diplomacy was an indispensable safeguard against overly destructive conflicts. Ambassadors on peace missions usually enjoyed the hospitality of the chief’s house, and nothing would be

⁶David Zeisberger’s *History of Northern American Indians*, ed., Archer Butler Hulbert and William Nathaniel Schwarze (Columbus: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1910), 116, 120, 129.

⁷John Heckewelder, *Account of the History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighboring States* (1876; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1971), 148-49.

spared to make such delegates comfortable. To do otherwise would degrade a headman's reputation among other nations and weaken his status among his own people.⁸

Presents for guests were also an important part of hospitable treatment. They served as physical examples of generosity that went beyond supplying visitors with provisions, which was expected of everyone. In Indian societies, where material goods and abstract favors were deemed to exist in a constant state of reciprocal redistribution, exchanging presents served as concrete examples of love, alliance, and peaceful intentions. These obligations were especially important in times of great danger, as when help in battle was requested and given. Indian notions of generosity, hospitality, and reciprocal exchange informed dealings between native groups and between Indians and Europeans. Favors were not to be refused among friends. Presents and hospitable treatment were the glue that held friends together in the face of natural challenges and human belligerence.⁹

Indians expected even more than gifts and hospitality for their participation in British military operations. Native women and children fended for themselves regularly when men left their settlements to hunt and trade. When Indian men joined British military excursions, they expected their allies to help protect and provision their dependents. For example, George Croghan reported to Pennsylvania's governor Robert Morris in July 1755 that twenty-five Indian women and children from his trading post at Aughwick had arrived in Berks County asking for food. Their husbands and kin had

⁸*Zeisberger's History*, 93; Heckewelder, *History, Manners, and Customs*, 181-82.

⁹On Indian generosity and the ambiguities of native notions of reciprocity, see David Murray, *Indian Giving*, 31-38. See also Axtell, *The European and the Indian*, 136, 348n8. For the "redistributive" reciprocal nature of Indian exchange, especially among the Iroquois, see Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 21-22, 47.

joined Major General Edward Braddock's campaign against Fort Duquesne, but the women and children had been sent away after reports that some of the women had consorted "scandalously" with English officers.¹⁰ Croghan argued that they should be provisioned, "as they had no Body to hunt for them they co'd not live without being somehow assisted by their Brethren."¹¹ This expectation of aid, based on pragmatic European necessities and native traditions of reciprocal social responsibility, affected English-Indian relations at nearly every turn.

Implicit in Croghan's report was the notion that some Indians preferred resorting to provincial authorities rather than settlers or traders for provisions. With the outbreak of hostilities between Delawares and Pennsylvanians in 1755, Indians could no longer expect to approach white backcountry residents safely. Many settlers made little distinction between Indian allies and those with less certain allegiances, and thought even less of their provincial leaders supplying possible enemies with goods. "Our People are very malicious against our Indians," Croghan reported. "They curse 'em to their Faces and say 'must we feed You, and your Husbands fight in the mean time for the French.'"¹² Indian families disrupted by war and living near fearful backcountry settlers needed to tread carefully. Without permanent military forts, where Indians could expect more assured compliance with provincial agreements and friendlier conduct, everyday encounters between whites and natives always carried the possibility of confrontation and violence.

¹⁰Weslager, *Delaware Indians*, 223.

¹¹Croghan to Morris, July 21, 1755, in *Colonial Records of Pennsylvania*, ed. Samuel Hazard (Harrisburg: T. Fenn, 1851), 6:494-95 (hereafter cited as *CRP*).

¹²*Ibid.*

As more Delawares joined French-allied Ohio Indian groups in their rebellion against English rule in late 1755, the need for protective forts became crucial in maintaining British-native alliances. Some Delawares living near the multicultural villages of Wyoming and Shamokin requested that forts and trading posts be constructed to guard those increasingly important population centers. The province was not yet ready to fund military outposts so deep into Pennsylvania's interior, but increasing numbers of Indian attacks on white settlements forced the government to consider frontier fortifications. In October, Conrad Weiser and other leading men wrote from Reading to report the town's susceptibility to French-allied Indian attack. "We are all in Uproar, all in Disorder," they wrote to Morris. They lacked experienced military leadership and warned that if the province failed to supply them with able officers and men, they must abandon their town and wait out their fate with Philadelphia's inhabitants.¹³ Panic and rumors spread quickly throughout the frontier, prompted by reports of actual Indian attacks farther west. But in November 1755, reports from Moravian mission towns near the Blue Mountains brought the threat of war closer to Philadelphia and its surrounding counties.¹⁴

Relations between Pennsylvania and Munsee Delawares, living near Wyoming on the North Branch of the Susquehanna River, had already become strained. Two late-October attacks on English traders near Shamokin had nearly destroyed any hopes of maintaining a Delaware-English alliance. Though no Wyoming Indians took part in those

¹³Conrad Weiser, et al., to Morris, Oct. 31, 1755, Timothy Horsfield Papers, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia (hereafter cited as Horsfield Papers).

¹⁴For descriptions of the spread of panic following Braddock's defeat and subsequent English problems maintaining Delaware alliances, see Wallace, *King of the Delawares*, 67-72; Weslager, *Delaware Indians*, 226-32.

attacks, they listened to backcountry rumors and assumed that the English would blame all Delawares alike. In early November, Moravian missionaries and traders brought frightening accounts from the Delaware towns. Indians near Shamokin told Moravian traders that many there had joined the French cause and intended to kill all English people on the frontier. Moravian missionaries traveling in the Susquehanna region reported seeing massed Indian tracks and hearing rumors of French and Indian incursions closer to Philadelphia. The missionaries tried to allay the Delawares' fears and suggested that they communicate their innocence to the governor immediately, but to little avail. Tensions had brought economic hardship to the Delawares because traders no longer visited Indian towns, and many feared that conflict was inevitable.¹⁵

Of more immediate concern to the inhabitants of Easton and Bethlehem were reports of unfamiliar Indians seen near the Moravian mission town of Gnadenhütten. The town's Indian converts maintained old contacts with friends and kin throughout eastern Pennsylvania. When the Moravian Indians heard about growing tensions on the Susquehanna and that hostile Delawares intended to strike the mission soon, panic swept through the town. David Zeisberger reported that belligerent Indians had offered the Christian converts safe conduct out of the area and had promised that the converts would suffer along with their European friends if they did not comply. Gnadenhütten's residents planned to take refuge in Bethlehem until the danger passed, but tragedy struck before they could evacuate their village.¹⁶

¹⁵ Horsfield to Morris, Nov. 2 and Nov. 10, 1755, Horsfield Papers; Horsfield to Morris, Nov. 15, 1755, Timothy Horsfield Letterbook, 1754-1755, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia (hereafter cited as Horsfield Letterbook).

¹⁶ "Examination of David Zeisberger," Nov. 22, 1755, Horsfield Papers.

On November 24, 1755, a large band of Munsees attacked Gnadenhütten, killing several inhabitants and partially burning the village. Gnadenhütten's Indian converts had long been a source of suspicion for Delawares living in Pennsylvania's interior, who saw the Christian Indians as too closely allied to English settlement ambitions and too eager to reject native culture for European lifeways. By attacking the mission town, they hoped to establish their ability to kill allies of the English and thwart provincial plans quickly and easily. The town was taken by surprise, despite the warnings of the previous month. Those who survived fled to Bethlehem, and on the way they met Timothy Horsfield and a company of provincial troops on their way to protect the mission settlement. Descriptions of the attack shocked Horsfield, who saw it as a harbinger of doom for the entire region. "Unless some Speedy Measures be fallen upon to stop the Depredations and Incursions of these Blood Thirsty Villains, I see nothing but the inevitable Ruin of our Country," he wrote to Morris. Without proper defensive measures, a small number of attackers using native stealth tactics could "disturb the Peace of a Whole Province, and baffle the Attempts of Thousands."¹⁷ These fears were confirmed almost immediately, when settlers began fleeing their homes for the more populated region. To make matters worse, Easton residents had resorted to vigilantism. In one instance, Easton men captured and imprisoned an innocent Indian without any cause and promised further reprisals against natives.¹⁸ With frontier tensions at the breaking point, Philadelphians feared that this

¹⁷Horsfield to Morris, Nov. 26, 1755, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 1st series, ed. Samuel Hazard (Philadelphia and Harrisburg: s. n., 1852-56), 2:520-23 (hereafter cited as *PA*).

¹⁸Horsfield to Morris, Nov. 29, 1755, Horsfield Letterbook.

attack on a peaceful mission town would bring the Delaware War into the heart of the province.¹⁹

If Gnadenhütten's attackers had hoped to drive a wedge between Christian Indians and their European friends, they must have been disappointed by the results. Terrified and impoverished by the loss of their village, Gnadenhütten's Delaware and Mahican residents sought refuge among the Moravians in Bethlehem. They lost no time in contacting Governor Morris, denouncing the recent attacks in the Susquehanna region, and denying any connection to acts of violence. As for the attack on their homes, they accepted it as the price for their allegiance to the Moravian Brethren and the province. Because the attack left them destitute, the Indian converts placed themselves at the mercy of the province, declaring that they were "entirely devoted to the English Government" and wished the province "Success and Prosperity ... against their and our Enemies."²⁰ Morris commended the refugees and promised that they would receive aid commensurate with their status as full citizens of Pennsylvania.

Morris also promised that he would build and garrison a fort at Gnadenhütten. This would help the refugees reclaim and guard their property and offer them "equal Security with the white people" on the frontier.²¹ Pennsylvania's Assembly has already authorized a grant of £60,000 for frontier defense on November 26, and a fort at Gnadenhütten would be just one in a line of forts stretching along the Blue Mountains

¹⁹For a description of the Gnadenhütten attack, its causes, and its significance, see Jane T. Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700-1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 184-86.

²⁰Address of Gnadenhütten Indians to Morris, Nov. 30, 1755, Horsfield Papers.

²¹Morris to the Gnadenhütten Indians, Dec. 4, 1755, Horsfield Papers; Answer of Gnadenhütten Indians to Morris, Horsfield Letterbook.

from the Delaware River in the north to Maryland's border in the south.²² The attack on Gnadenhütten had surely terrified the frontier's residents, but it drove the village's Indians even closer to the provincial establishment. Burned and empty, Gnadenhütten had been converted from an Indian place, albeit a Europeanized one, into an unoccupied terrain upon which English and Indian ambitions would be contested and negotiated for the next few years.

Morris's promise to fortify the frontier came just in time for white settlers, already terrified by the increasing level of violence. Even before the Gnadenhütten attack, magistrates Horsfield, William Parsons, and James Martin had ordered local townships and districts to maintain rangers in the woods and hills near their homes. They warned frontier settlers that people in Easton, Reading, Bethlehem, and other large towns shared the same dangers as those in more remote areas. Town justices possessed no arms, forces, or expertise capable of defending the region, so smaller settlements and individual farmers would have to fend for themselves.²³ This request carried its own risks, especially in remote areas where settlers were accustomed to taking matters into their own hands. On December 1, a Bucks County vigilante stopped and threatened one of Horsfield's express riders. The incident ended without injury, and though Horsfield promised to make an example of this "villain," the danger from such individual actions was clear.²⁴ Vigilantism would only increase the danger of Indian reprisals and make it difficult for magistrates and militia commanders to stabilize the region.

²²C. Hale Sipe, *The Indian Wars of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, PA: The Telegraph Press, 1929), 252.

²³Address of Horsfield, et al., Nov. 24, 1755, Horsfield Papers.

²⁴Horsfield to Morris, Dec. 1, 1755, Horsfield Letterbook.

A few days later, a body of two hundred Indians attacked and cut off a settler family north of the Blue Mountains. Forced to work with the resources he had, Horsfield notified Northampton County constables to give their inhabitants “timely Notice to be upon their Guard and to Assemble themselves to March against our Barbarous and Cruel Enemy” with whatever arms and provisions they could muster. This could not have been very encouraging to settlers, already afraid to leave their homes for even short periods. Even Horsfield was despondent, telling Morris, “When we have the People, we have no Proper Persons to lead them, and what can we Expect?”²⁵ Without an organized militia to protect the frontier, county officials could not expect to hold off Indian attacks indefinitely.

Though the line of defensive forts was a provincial initiative, the concept of a fort at Gnadenhütten began with the Bethlehem Moravians. Days after the attack, Moravian bishop Augustus Spangenberg offered ten acres of land for the province to build a fort at the site.²⁶ This appealed to Morris, who saw Gnadenhütten as a strategic key to safeguarding passes through the Blue Mountains. The governor’s original idea was to supply the Moravian Brethren with funds and have them construct the fort, provided that they kept their goals modest. “The Fort intended to be built will only be a Wooden one,” he instructed, “Or a Stockade thrown round the Buildings there, as shall be found most convenient.”²⁷

The Moravians had other ideas. While they had already begun to fortify and arm Bethlehem to a degree unusual for pacifists, they claimed little expertise in fort

²⁵Horsfield to the Constables of Northampton County, and Horsfield to Morris, Dec. 12, 1755, Horsfield Letterbook.

²⁶William A. Hunter, *Forts on the Pennsylvania Frontier*, 234.

²⁷Morris to Horsfield, Dec. 4, 1755, Horsfield Papers.

construction and asked that Easton's justice William Parsons undertake the project. Time was of the essence: Horsfield notified Morris that a family had been killed within five miles of Gnadenhütten, and that settlers nearby were so frightened that nobody could be found to salvage the Indians' corn stores from the burned village.²⁸ The Assembly agreed to send Capt. William Hays and a small company of provincial troops to Gnadenhütten to guard the remains of the town. On December 17, Spangenberg sought to spur on the province with new reports. Friendly Indians had informed the Moravian Brethren that hostile natives would soon attack their mission towns of Nazareth, Gnadenhal, and Friedenthal. Spangenberg asked the province to supply 170 men to help defend the settlements. Such a body of men, Spangenberg argued, would do as well as a fort to defend the villages until outposts could be built.²⁹ Provincial Commissioners James Hamilton, Joseph Fox, and Benjamin Franklin arrived in Easton on December 20 to begin coordinating defense efforts. At the same time, William Hays's company arrived in Gnadenhütten to guard the Indians' property and to secure the site for a planned fort.³⁰

Hays's small outfit proved ineffective against Gnadenhütten's Indian attackers, with their superior backcountry fighting skills and intelligence-gathering abilities. On January 1, 1756, the Munsees struck at Hays's company in Gnadenhütten, burning what was left of the town and routing the defenders completely. Twenty of Hays's 72 men died in the attack, and more deserted after fleeing the town, reducing the company to only 18

²⁸Horsfield to Morris, Dec. 8, 1755, Horsfield Papers.

²⁹Spangenberg to Morris, Dec. 17, 1755, Horsfield Papers.

³⁰Hunter, *Forts on the Pennsylvania Frontier*, 234-35.

men.³¹ This new attack on the very force sent to secure the area panicked the region. On January 3, a handful of Indians attacked settlers near Allemangel, a few miles from Gnadenhütten, and set the entire population of seventy people fleeing for their lives over the Blue Mountains.³²

Benjamin Franklin, in Bethlehem organizing the expedition to build the Gnadenhütten fort, was appalled at the chaos on the frontier and in the Moravian capital. "We found this place fill'd with Refugees," he wrote to Morris, "the Workmen's Shops, and even the Cellars being crouded with Women and Children." He warned the governor that all the regions' settlements had requested additional militiamen. Lehigh Township had been entirely deserted after news of Hays's defeat. Refugees from the Irish Settlement on the Lehigh promised to retreat from the area entirely unless thirty men be sent to guard them and their property. Franklin was hesitant to begin moving troops around at the whims of panicked residents, especially refugees who had chosen to flee rather than to "behave like Men." He immediately ordered local magistrates to raise troops or risk losing their settlements and authorized a bounty of \$40 per Indian scalp. He also prepared to set out for Gnadenhütten with his party and suggested to Morris that he complete the "Ranging Line of Forts" as soon as possible.³³

³¹William Hays to Morris and the Provincial Commissioners, Jan. 3, 1756, in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, eds. Leonard W. Labaree et al. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 6:341-42 (hereafter cited as *Franklin Papers*).

³²Franklin to David Hall, *Franklin Papers*, 6:348-49. The settlers fleeing from Allemangel soon met a party of 17 men led by trader Jacob Levan, and they regrouped and fought off the pursuing Indians.

³³Franklin to John Vanetta (Van Etten), Jan. 12, 1756, *PA*, 2:546-47; Franklin to Morris, Jan. 14, 1756, *PA* 2:548-50.

Franklin left Bethlehem on January 15, confident that he and his party of 130 men could reach Gnadenhütten and have the fort line finished in a few weeks.³⁴ According to Thomas Lloyd, an ensign in the expedition, the route was a desolate and frightening scene of chaos. Houses and farms had been burnt. Bodies lay unburied, exposed to the elements, wildlife, and “all Kinds of Mischief perpetrated that wanton Cruelty can invent.”³⁵ Despite the danger to the exposed party from Indians who had already proven their inclination to attack large bodies of troops, the expedition arrived in Gnadenhütten on the 16th and began burying the dead, laying out their fort, and cutting palisades.

Nine days later, Franklin declared the fort finished and named it for his friend William Allen, Pennsylvania’s chief justice. The finished fort was 125 feet long and 50 feet wide, with triangular bastions, a twelve-foot high palisade, a surrounding trench, and three buildings for the garrison. “We had one swivel Gun, which we mounted on one of the Angles,” Franklin wrote later in his autobiography, “And fired it as soon as fix’d, to let the Indians know, if any were within hearing, that we had such Pieces, and this out Fort (if such a magnificent Name may be given to so miserable a Stockade) was finished in a Week.” He hoped that the “contemptible” fort would still be “a sufficient Defence against Indians who have no cannon.”³⁶ Despite Franklin’s uncomplimentary description, the small fort was a substantial symbol for the chaotic Lehigh region. It was well built

³⁴Benjamin Franklin to Deborah Franklin, Jan. 15, 1756, *Franklin Papers*, 6:360-61.

³⁵Thomas Lloyd to [Unknown], Jan. 30, 1756, *Franklin Papers*, 6:380-82.

³⁶Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography and other Writings on Politics, Economics, and Virtue*, ed. Alan Houston (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 123-24. Franklin’s later self-deprecation was probably an effort to downplay the importance of a fort that ended up being manned for a short period. For some of Franklin’s contemporaneous letters describing Fort Allen’s construction, see *Franklin Papers*, 6:365-71.

despite its speedy construction, unlike Fort Franklin, the next fort down the defensive line, which would stand only for a few months.³⁷ With a proper garrison, Fort Allen could anchor the province's defense of the Blue Mountains.

Procuring and provisioning garrisons quickly became a harsh burden for the province, despite the fort chain's speedy construction. By early February, the project had nearly devoured the £60,000 authorized by the Assembly.³⁸ Lack of experienced officers and proper measures for establishing military law and discipline also threatened the enterprise.³⁹ Fort Allen's original garrison consisted of 50 men under Captain Isaac Wayne, and the combined garrisons on the fort line totaled only 389 men.⁴⁰ Many of them spent much of their time away from their forts, escorting wagon trains and friendly Indians, ranging the frontier, and protecting settlers if requested. For example, John Mee and Joseph Leacock, farmers living a couple of miles from Fort Allen, asked for men to protect them while they erected new fences and fertilized their fields.⁴¹ Farmers needed protection to perform their most basic chores during the Delaware uprising, and they stressed undermanned militia units to their limits. Without sufficient numbers of well-trained soldiers and officers, the fort line garrisons were stretched too thin to guard against Indian incursions.

In addition to tactical difficulties, it soon became clear to the province's leaders that the original strategic basis for the line of forts was unworkable. Pennsylvania's commissioners had hoped that after the frontier was secured and its women and children

³⁷Hunter, *Forts on the Pennsylvania Frontier*, 259.

³⁸Morris to George Washington, Feb. 2, 1756, *PA*, 2:564-65.

³⁹Morris to William Shirley, Feb. 9, 1756, *PA*, 2:569-70.

⁴⁰"Position of Troops in Northhampton County," Feb. 23, 1756, *Franklin Papers*, 6:408.

⁴¹Petition of John Hughes to Morris, Apr. 21, 1756, *PA*, 2:638.

possessed safe refuges, provincial troops could invade the Susquehanna country and take the fight to the attackers' homes. But settlers and militiamen preferred defending their own territory to invading Indian country. Attempts to motivate colonial raiding parties with scalp bounties failed.⁴² Settlers living under the constant threat of attack had little desire to further infuriate the Munsees or other hostile Indians, and valued the fort line for the defense it offered them rather than for its role in any overall strategic scheme. As long as soldiers remained nearby, settlers were satisfied to wait out the situation and hope for the best.

By the summer of 1756, Fort Allen had already fallen into a state of mismanagement and confusion. When James Young, Commissary General of the Musters, inspected the fort in June he found only fifteen men present without any commander. The rest of the garrison was scattered throughout the country between Fort Allen and Bethlehem, escorting friendly Indian delegations and Moravians. Jacob Meis, the commanding lieutenant, was in Easton petitioning for soldiers' back pay. Young could not even find most of the fort's provisions, though he noted seeing a "large Quantity of Beef very ill Cured."⁴³ When Fort Allen's new commander, Capt. George Reynolds, arrived in late June, he reported the poor condition of the garrison and a shocking lack of decent arms and ammunition, "not above fifteen Gunes any ways Good," and asked that he be allowed to raid Bethlehem's armories for decent

⁴²Pennsylvania Commissioners to Morris, June 14, 1756, *CRP*, 7:153-54. As noted in Chapter 1, scalp bounties were a commonly used method of motivating settlers and Indians to participate in military activities and punitive missions. Axtell, *The European and the Indian*, 215-23.

⁴³"A Journal from Reading to the Sundry Forts and Garrisons Along the Northern Frontiers of the Province," June 21, 1756, *PA*, 2:677-78.

munitions.⁴⁴ But other fort commanders in the region had already coveted and confiscated some of the Moravian Brethren's best weapons.⁴⁵ After six months, the Blue Mountain forts had done little to improve the province's position in the ongoing Delaware war and seemed barely capable of maintaining their own garrisons and protecting the region.

However ill-suited Fort Allen may have seemed as a protector of region's settlers, it soon began to emerge as an Indian refuge. Nearby Bethlehem had been drowned in white and Indian refugees since the beginning of the year. "Most of our Rooms have been obliged to lodge 20 or 25 Persons and Seventy of our Indians have lived in one Small House where they had but 2 Rooms," wrote one of the Moravians in April. But many Indians preferred the cramped quarters of Bethlehem or Fort Allen to the uncertain interior of the province. For example, two Moravian Indians, Nicodemus and his son Christian, had tried moving to the multicultural Indian town of Tioga. When they learned that French-allied Munsees dominated the town, they fled back to the safety of Fort Allen and the protection of Captain Newcastle, an Iroquois delegate who had come there to negotiate peace between the Delawares and the Pennsylvanians.⁴⁶ Indeed, much of the congestion in Bethlehem had come in response Newcastle's earlier requests for friendly Indians to meet him in Bethlehem for a May conference.

Although Newcastle's invitees claimed to be friendly to the English, Moravians noted that the new arrivals kept their arms ready and could fall upon the townspeople at

⁴⁴Reynolds to Parsons, July 10, 1756, Horsfield Papers.

⁴⁵William Franklin to Horsfield, June 21, 1756, Horsfield Papers.

⁴⁶Horsfield to Morris, June 21, 1756, Horsfield Papers; "Memorandum Regarding Unfriendly Indians," June 30, 1756, Horsfield Papers.

any time.⁴⁷ Under normal circumstances, Indian ambassadors meeting in English towns would be afforded the benefit of the doubt, but inflamed tensions increased the likelihood of unintended conflict. While at Fort Allen, Newcastle elicited promises from the garrison that any friendly Indians on diplomatic business would be protected and provisioned. He also set up a signal of friendship: The lead man in any party of friendly Indians approaching a fort should carry a green bush.⁴⁸ Over the next few weeks Newcastle continued sending Indians to Bethlehem and Fort Allen, promising that he and visiting Shawnee chief King Paxinosa would see to it that they were well treated and supplied.⁴⁹ Soon, most of these Indians would be shuttled to Easton for a larger peace conference. But many Indians would end up appreciating the hospitality of the Fort Allen area more than the intolerant atmosphere of Easton.

As the Easton Conference approached, Morris ordered that all Indian refugees and visitors be moved there from Bethlehem. Hopefully, this would relieve crowding in the Moravian city and allow the province to better help displaced natives. It devolved upon William Parsons, Easton's chief magistrate and the region's military commander, to prepare the town for their arrival. Morris asked Parsons to post guards to ensure that the Indians remained safe "from the Insults of the People," but also to watch the Indians themselves "in case they should not be so Friendly as they pretend."⁵⁰ Parsons's job was unenviable: he must watch out for Indian intrigue and keep his own intolerant "Jersey People" in check. In addition to those worries, he needed to maintain order among the

⁴⁷Letter from Unnamed Bethlehem Resident, Apr., 1756, Horsfield Papers.

⁴⁸"Captain Newcastle's Instructions," June 28, 1756, Horsfield Papers.

⁴⁹Captain Newcastle to the Captain of Fort Allen, July 1, 1756, *CRP*, 7:189; Newcastle to Spangenberg, July 1, 1756, Horsfield Papers.

⁵⁰Morris to Parsons, July 11, 1756, Horsfield Papers.

guards themselves. Easton's tavern keepers loved new customers and sold rum to Indians, townsfolk, and soldiers alike. With Indians, civilians, and soldiers "being all drunk," complained Parsons, the town would be "in the Utmost Confusion and Danger" during the conference.⁵¹

Parsons's responsibilities were heavy and the guest of honor had yet to arrive. On July 14, Captain Reynolds sent word to Bethlehem that Delaware chief Teedyuscung and his retinue would arrive soon at Fort Allen, en route to the Easton conference.⁵²

Teedyuscung, a Munsee chief living at Tioga, whom the English sometimes called "King of the Delawares," had led a few violent forays against settler communities during the preceding months and his participation was vital to securing peace.⁵³ When he arrived in Easton on July 18, he lost no time in taking advantage of the hospitality commonly offered at peace conferences. No traders had traveled up the Susquehanna for some time, and Teedyuscung hoped that he would find plenty of provisions and rum available at the conference. He told Parsons that his journey from Tioga was a long way to go without any rum and continued hinting until Parsons supplied the chief with two small bottles. Parsons hoped that this would satisfy the "King," and he quickly retired to bed before Teedyuscung could request more liquor.⁵⁴

Morris's July conference with Delaware and Six Nations Iroquois representatives was a just preliminary meeting, held to make arrangements for broader talks later on. This did not keep many attending Indians from enjoying the accoutrements of friendly Indian-European diplomacy. This merriment frustrated the conference's organizers, but

⁵¹Morris to Horsfield, July 14, 1756, Horsfield Papers.

⁵²Reynolds to William Edwards, July 14, 1756, Horsfield Papers.

⁵³Wallace, *King of the Delawares*, 83-86.

⁵⁴Parsons to Horsfield, July 18, 1756, Horsfield Papers.

was rare entertainment for the delegates.⁵⁵ Morris's secretary Richard Peters reported that Teedyuscung and his "wild Company" started the conference off "perpetually Drunk, very much on the Gascoon [bragging], and at times abusive to the Inhabitants" of Easton. Peters found the "King of the Delawares" to be a formidable figure. He described the Munsee Delaware chief as a "lusty rawboned Man, haughty and very desirous of Respect and Command," who could "drink three Quarts or a Gallon of Rum a Day without being Drunk." Conrad Weiser, who had never before met the Delaware chief, spent most of the conference trying to form an opinion of Teedyuscung's reliability and keeping the revels from getting out of hand. In one instance, Newcastle, who had also been drinking, accused Teedyuscung of threatening to kill him with witchcraft.⁵⁶ Weiser mediated the conflict between the two headmen, but these episodes of drunkenness suggest that diplomacy might not have been Teedyuscung's only concern at Easton.

When Robert Morris suggested that Bethlehem might be a better place to continue the proceedings, Teedyuscung was indignant. He did not wish to interrupt his enjoyment of the conference, especially since he had just come from Bethlehem. The King was comfortable where he was and could not understand why the governor would send him "from place to place like a Child."⁵⁷ Easton might have been the home of intolerant Indian-hating Pennsylvanians and New Jersey immigrants, but it still offered a full array of amenities not available in Susquehanna country. Teedyuscung, certain of his

⁵⁵For an amusing and informative description of how treaty conference organizers worried about attendees' revels, see Merrell, *Into the American Woods*, 262-64.

⁵⁶Parsons' Diary of a Council Held at Easton, July 24-27, 1756, in *Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws, 1607-1789*, gen. ed. Alden T. Vaughan, vol. 3, *Pennsylvania Treaties, 1756-1775*, ed. Alison Duncan Hirsch (Washington: University Publications of America, 1979), 106-09 (hereafter cited as *Pennsylvania Treaties*).

⁵⁷Reply of Teedyuscung to Morris, *PA*, 2:721-22.

importance in the peace process, expected the full hospitality accorded to native ambassadors in his own culture and insisted upon staying where he could find suitable entertainment. Morris relented and held the conference at Easton. In the end, Teedyuscung and Newcastle agreed to convince other influential Delawares to meet again at Easton later in the year. But the conference's completion did not mean the end of the delegates' appetite for revelry. By then, Easton's townsfolk were ready for some peace and quiet, and Bethlehem still stretched at the seams with refugees. Luckily for Teedyuscung's band, another entertaining location lay just across the Blue Mountains.

Fort Allen had already become a popular stopping point for Indians traveling from the Susquehanna country to towns south of the Blue Mountains. With the conference underway at Easton, provincial officials were alarmed by rumors of hundreds of Indians massing near the fort, ready to attack it or cross the mountains and set upon the conference itself. Horsfield asked Reynolds to send any passing Indians straight to Easton, where the mediating power of attending chiefs and provincial guards could keep them in check.⁵⁸ By early August, Teedyuscung had concluded his talks with Morris and had started his journey back to Wyoming and Tioga to convince more Indians to make peace with the province. But he stopped at Fort Allen upon crossing the Blue Mountains to wait for his baggage train to catch up and apparently liked it so much that he settled in for a short stay.⁵⁹

Richard Peters was alarmed at news of Teedyuscung's delay at the fort, and insisted that the chief be sent on his way so that he would have time to convince Tioga's

⁵⁸Horsfield to Parsons, Aug. 9, 1756, Horsfield Papers.

⁵⁹Teedyuscung to Horsfield and Parsons, Aug. 9, 1756, Horsfield Papers.

Indians to come to Easton before winter.⁶⁰ Teedyuscung apologized and agreed to send two men to Tioga in his place, implying that he was comfortable where he was. When the men returned, he would then “make all Dispatch” in bringing the talks to a successful conclusion.⁶¹ Morris was surprised that Teedyuscung kept “loitering at a fort in so shameful a manner when he knows the necessity there is of his speedy Return to his People.” He sent Parsons a string of wampum to give to the chief to urge him on his way. “Remind him how much he has to do and how little a time it is before the Winter will set in,” Morris prodded Parsons.⁶² But trouble was brewing at Fort Allen. When Morris referred to Teedyuscung’s “shameful” manner, Parsons thought he was referring to the chief’s lack of dispatch. He would soon find that the matter was more complicated.

A few days later, Parsons wrote to the governor with a partial explanation for Teedyuscung’s “loitering.” When he asked Teedyuscung’s interpreter and aide, Ben, why the chief tarried so long at Fort Allen, Ben revealed that it was on account of liquor, and the fort’s temporary commander, Lt. Miller. The interpreter said that the fort’s commander, Capt. Reynolds, had left for Philadelphia (apparently not an uncommon occurrence), leaving the “villainous” lieutenant in command and in position to sell liquor to Indians and white men alike. “As long as the Indians had money,” Ben told Parsons, “the Lieutenant sold them Rum, so that they were almost always drunk.” Furthermore, according to Ben, Miller also cheated Teedyuscung, “teezing him and plying him with Rum till the old Man was off his Guard.” Teedyuscung had brought sixteen deerskins with him as a present for Morris, so that the governor could make himself a “pair of

⁶⁰Peters to Parsons, Aug. 11, 1756, Horsfield Papers.

⁶¹Horsfield to Teedyuscung, Aug. 12, 1756, Horsfield Papers.

⁶²Morris to Horsfield, Aug. 13, 1756, Horsfield Papers.

gloves.” Miller teased Teedyuscung that gloves did not require so much leather, and that the chief should sell him some of the skins. Ben suggested that this was a misunderstanding of the way Indians talked about gifts and insisted that the chief had no intention of selling his present for the governor. But after Teedyuscung had drunk enough, Miller was able to take all of the skins for only £3.⁶³ The prospect of a provincial officer cheating and delaying an important Indian delegate at such a critical point in peace negotiations was bad enough, but by then, Parsons already knew that the context of Teedyuscung’s loitering was even more troubling.

When Reynolds returned to Fort Allen, he acknowledged having trouble with the visiting Indians. He wrote Parsons to tell him that he was building a “shade” for the Indians a good distance from the fort. “I am resolved to let no more of them into ye fort for ye are So unruly that there is no Liveing with them,” he reported. He added that while he was away in Philadelphia, some men “got a little mery with the Liquor.”⁶⁴ Reynolds was gifted at understatement. That merriness was actually a full-fledged mutiny, prompted by a corporal, Christian Weyrick, and uncontrolled liquor availability.⁶⁵

On August 5, Teedyuscung brought three women into the fort. While he “kept one as his own,” according to Reynolds, the other two joked and cavorted with Lieutenant Miller and his sergeants. Jealous of the officers, a drunken Weyrick tried to have the women ejected from the fort. When Miller refused, Weyrick attacked him. Weyrick and

⁶³Parsons to Morris, Aug. 8, 1756, *PA*, 2:745-46.

⁶⁴Reynolds to Parsons, Aug. 12, 1756, Horsfield Papers.

⁶⁵Discipline was a major problem among provincial forces during the Seven Years’ War for a variety of reasons, including a lack of capable officers, inability of officers to inflict the full brunt of military punishment, and the backgrounds of the troops themselves. This was especially true in Pennsylvania, where most troops were day laborers or artisans, and were unused to harsh discipline and unwilling to easily change their ways. Matthew C. Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry*, 107-21.

two other men proceeded to behave “very undecently” with the women, washing their genitals with rum afterwards to prevent “Getting Sum Distemper of ye Squas.” The mutineers then went on an alcohol-fueled rampage, firing guns into the fort’s walls and encouraging their comrades to take over the post and kill several Reading militiamen who had sided with Miller.⁶⁶ After hearing about the uprising, Parsons sent Capt. Jacob Wetterhold to Fort Allen to arrest Weyrick for inciting the mutiny and Miller for not suppressing the uprising.⁶⁷ Wetterhold reported that the fort’s ensign, who had also been absent, returned and brought the situation under control on August 6. Wetterhold also identified liquor as the probable engine of the dispute.⁶⁸ Available liquor seemed to be the common thread linking Teedyuscung’s delay and the fort’s mutiny.⁶⁹

Teedyuscung finally left Fort Allen on August 15, after being embarrassed and angered by what he probably interpreted as a breach of hospitality. When he first heard about the mutiny, Parsons ordered the fort’s commander to restrict the Indians’ rum allowance to one-quarter of a pint per day. When Teedyuscung heard about the restriction, he felt ashamed and unwelcome and vacated the fort. This validated Parsons’s suspicion that available liquor caused the ruckus and he immediately ordered Reynolds to build the Indians their shelter outside of the fort. He would have to make up the affront to

⁶⁶Reynolds to Weiser, Aug. 11, 1756, in Hunter, *Forts on the Pennsylvania Frontier*, 241.

⁶⁷Parsons to Wetterhold, Aug. 12, 1756, *PA*, 2:741.

⁶⁸Wetterhold to Parsons, Aug. 12, 1756, *PA*, 2:754-55.

⁶⁹See Wallace, *King of the Delawares*, 116-18, for a description of the mutiny and its causes. Wallace claims that Teedyuscung “struck the match” that sparked the mutiny by bringing women into the fort, but that seems an unfair burden to place upon Teedyuscung, and especially upon the women, who were possibly raped by drunken soldiers.

Teedyuscung later. In the meantime, he had touched the bottom of Fort Allen's swamp of troubles and needed to bring order to the post.

Personnel at Fort Allen had gone from supplying rum as a present and occasional trade item to selling it as a commodity. "I must acquaint your Honour," Parsons wrote to Morris, "That from some Hints I have so received this Day or two, I have reason to think they have turn'd ye Fort to a Dram Shop."⁷⁰ Horsfield's own investigation confirmed Parsons' suspicions that Reynolds's liquor policies caused the "Strange doings" at Fort Allen. "I've been told that Capt. Reynolds has had one hogshed of rum after another and sold it to his Men and Doubly to ye Indians and Every one that would give Money for it," he told Parsons, fearing that one of the most crucial forts in the defensive chain had succumbed to corruption and ineptitude.⁷¹

Only one day after reporting the "dram shop" allegation to the governor, Parsons wrote to report that Reynolds was again away from his post and Teedyuscung had returned.⁷² This came amidst new rumors that Indians leaving the Easton treaty had stopped between Fort Allen and Wyoming, renounced their promises of peace, and burned the presents they had received. Indians were rumored to be massing north of the Blue Mountains to attack white settlements; even Teedyuscung had told friendly Indians to leave the area or be killed along with the whites. "I truly think we are in more Danger now than We have been," Horsfield wrote to Parson, adding that if the distractions could

⁷⁰Parsons to Richard Peters, Aug. 15, 1756, *PA* 2:747; Parsons to Morris, Aug. 15, 1756, Horsfield Papers.

⁷¹Horsfield to Parsons, Aug. 15, 1756, Horsfield Papers.

⁷²Parsons to Morris, *PA*, 2:749.

not be straightened out at Fort Allen, the outpost would be "Surprised and taken by ye Indians."⁷³

From Teedyuscung's cultural perspective, the situation at the fort must have been confusing. After the Easton conference, where provincial representatives had treated him with great respect and deference, a short sabbatical at Fort Allen probably seemed a reasonable extension of diplomatic customs. Expecting reciprocation for his efforts to obtain peace and to work for the good of the province, Teedyuscung was instead cheated by the acting commander of the fort. Present at the scene of a subsequent drunken mutiny, he found his people expelled from the fort and restricted in their liquor allowance, as if the uprising had been their fault. Teedyuscung's role in the episode should not be idealized. He had "loitered" at the fort because liquor could be had there, apparently at affordable prices and in good supply. But he considered himself to be on official provincial business and expected politeness and hospitality from the fort's commandant. Horsfield knew that Teedyuscung must be hurried upon his way, but he also understood that the situation required tact and understanding of the Delaware headman's point of view. Teedyuscung needed no correction; rather, the fort and its garrison had failed in their mission to guard the province and support its diplomatic efforts.

Unrest at Fort Allen threatened to upset the province's peace plans. The Assembly acted quickly. The Provincial Council recommended that Weiser and Parsons be sent to Fort Allen to punish Lt. Miller, reestablish order, and urge Teedyuscung on his way. Morris, no longer governor but still in attendance at the Council (he had been replaced by

⁷³Horsfield to Parsons, Aug. 19, 1756, Horsfield Papers.

William Denny in the interim), suggested that Newcastle be sent to the Six Nations to ask what their leaders thought of Teedyuscung's loitering and spreading dissent.⁷⁴ Denny immediately ordered Weiser to look into the affair, and to make any inquiries and arrests he deemed necessary.⁷⁵ After spending over £60,000 on frontier defenses, Pennsylvania's government could not allow one of its forts to endanger the peace of the region it had been charged to protect.

As the governor and council tried to minimize the damage caused by the mutiny, Horsfield arrived at Fort Allen and discovered that an ill-tempered Teedyuscung had already left. Hurrying up the trail, Horsfield caught up with him a few miles away. Teedyuscung claimed to be especially upset about being cheated out of his skins, as he has hoped to make Morris a great show of his generosity. Horsfield promised to retrieve the skins from Miller and to forward them to Morris. This satisfied Teedyuscung, who agreed to leave for Wyoming as soon as possible.

When Horsfield and Teedyuscung returned to Fort Allen, they found that Reynolds and his ensign had abandoned the fort and that the post was under the temporary command of the "sober and prudent" Lieutenant Geiger of Wetterhold's company. Horsfield confirmed Parsons's reports that Reynolds had "made a Tippeling House of the Fort" and discovered that "Several of the Men after a Deduction of all their pay remain 14 or 15 [pounds] indebted to their Capt. for Liquor." Horsfield promised to restrict all rum and punch sales indefinitely, hoping that this would take care of the lack

⁷⁴Pennsylvania Council, Aug. 21, 1756, *CRP*, 7:222-23; Denny to Sir Charles Hardy, Aug. 21, 1756, *CRP*, 7:223-25.

⁷⁵Denny to Weiser, Aug. 21, 1756, Horsfield Papers.

of discipline.⁷⁶ Weiser and Parsons decided that the officers' malfeasance had sunk too deeply into the garrison's structure and determined that Fort Allen's entire complement of troops must be removed to alleviate the stain of corruption.⁷⁷ Reynolds and his whole garrison ended up at nearby Fort Norris, and that fort's complement, led by Captain Jacob Orndt, arrived at Fort Allen just in time to host Teedyuscung and his retinue one last time before the King's return to the north.

Teedyuscung wasted little time in finishing his business at Tioga and Wyoming. On October 9, he sent word to Orndt and Reynolds that he was waiting at Wyoming and that he would soon deliver several white prisoners to comply with treaty obligations. But Teedyuscung had heard rumors that if he brought a large party to Fort Allen or Easton, the English would kill them all. He thought it prudent to send one Indian with one prisoner to Fort Allen to make sure his people would be safe. Orndt expected a large number of Delawares and Iroquois to pass by his fort on their way to the autumn Easton conference and wanted no repeat of the summer's events. He ordered a shelter built for Teedyuscung's band and awaited his arrival.⁷⁸

Almost three weeks later there was still no sign of Teedyuscung, but rumors circulated that a hundred Indian men had camped near Fort Allen.⁷⁹ The rumored band were supposedly Minisink Delawares, who had come seeking a separate treaty with the province. Denny was at a loss to know how to deal with them, since Sir William Johnson had just been appointed Indian Superintendent for the Northern District and the

⁷⁶Parsons to Morris, Aug. 21, 1756, Horsfield Papers.

⁷⁷Jacob Orndt to Weiser, Aug. 24, 1756, Horsfield Papers. Reynolds and Miller defended themselves successfully and avoided a court martial. Reynolds to Weiser, Aug. 26, 1756, Horsfield Papers.

⁷⁸Orndt and Reynolds to Parsons, Oct. 9, 1756, *PA*, 3:5-6.

⁷⁹Horsfield to Denny, Oct. 27, 1756, Horsfield Papers.

provincial government did not yet know the scope of his diplomatic authority. The Council advised Denny to offer them supplies, gifts, and friendship, but also to inform them that Pennsylvania could not make peace with Indians who might continue to attack neighboring colonies.⁸⁰ News of the Minisinks' arrival came amidst new reports of violence in the region: several settlers had been attacked near Forts Lebanon and Northkill, farther south on the defensive line. Fort Lebanon's commander admitted that the outposts were "too weak to be of any Service to the Frontier" in the face of a large-scale Indian attack or siege.⁸¹ A force of a hundred Minisinks could easily overcome Fort Allen and threaten to disrupt the Easton conference if they decided to pursue conflict instead of diplomacy.

When Weiser, Horsfield, and Parsons tried to investigate the report about the large Minisink band, they found the situation even more troubling. Horsfield reported a rumor that 140 Indians, in two camps near Fort Allen, had originally intended to attack the Easton conference while Denny and Teedyuscung's party were in attendance. Later, they decided to wait until the conference concluded and then attack Bethlehem instead, making them "Masters of the whole Country." Weiser was skeptical; when he checked out the rumor with two Indians who had just come from Fort Allen, they advised him to pay no heed to the story. The Indians reminded Weiser that he had told them not to listen to the rumors of "ugly birds." "We took your advice in good part," they reminded the colonel, "So we desire you will take ours."⁸² Weiser did. He decided to wait for Teedyuscung to arrive in Easton and then to send out official messengers to ascertain the

⁸⁰Council to Denny, Oct. 29, 1756, *Franklin Papers*, 7:6-7.

⁸¹Jacob Morgan to Denny, Nov. 4, 1756, *PA*, 3:30-31.

⁸²"Extract of Conrad Weiser's Journal," Nov. 5, 1756, *PA*, 3:32-33.

Minisinks' purposes. He was also curious to find out why they preferred camping near Fort Allen to the amenities of Easton.

Fear and promises of hospitality caused the Minisinks to wait out the conference near Fort Allen. By November 6, tensions were high at Easton; Denny had not yet arrived and the Indians there feared that either the English or the Minisinks intended to fall upon them.⁸³ When Denny arrived two days later, he and Teedyuscung quickly sent out a messenger, Delaware chief Tatamy, to meet with the Minisink bands and invite them to the conference. The Minisinks politely refused, saying they preferred the area around Fort Allen and had already arranged with Teedyuscung that they should remain there. As for the treaty talks, they assured Tatamy that they would agree to any terms that Teedyuscung could secure. Back at the conference, Teedyuscung confirmed that the Minisinks had agreed to travel "no further than a certain Place" and to allow Teedyuscung to negotiate in their stead.⁸⁴ At first glance, the strategy seemed to be an effort for Teedyuscung and others to apply pressure on the negotiations. With 140 Indians ready to attack the most vital fort on the frontier line, and with Easton filled to capacity with Delaware and Iroquois delegates, Denny might be obliged to look favorably on the Indians' demands. However, Weiser soon began to wonder if the Minisinks' choice of Fort Allen was not based more on their preference for that location.

By this time, Fort Allen had become a principal gateway through the Blue Mountains and into Northhampton County for the Susquehanna Delawares. Rum remained available near the fort, despite orders to limit its sale during the conference. Weiser and his troops spent most of their time escorting Indians back and forth between

⁸³Weiser and Parsons to Denny, Nov. 6, 1756, *PA*, 3:35.

⁸⁴"Council held at Easton," *Pennsylvania Treaties*, 144-45.

Fort Allen and Easton. With the troops away from the fort, Weiser worried about the Minisinks' conduct. One of the Indians under his protection, Deedjoskan, agreed to act as an emissary to the Minisinks. In actuality, he spent most of his time trying to acquire rum so that he might "have a Frolick with his Company" at the fort. Weiser offered rum to Deedjoskan's party on the condition that they consume it only in the Indian camp outside the fort, and he warned that if any Indians tried to enter the fort, "they must take what follows." One of Deedjoskan's men tried to climb the palisade at night after having too much rum, and cried, "Damn you all I value you not!" after Weiser made him jump down.⁸⁵ Fort Allen's garrison spent a few anxious weeks surrounded by Indians, many of whom spent their time enjoying the availability of liquor in the fort's neighborhood.

The Easton conference ended without any serious trouble near Fort Allen. By December, most of the attendees had been escorted back across the Blue Mountains and into the Susquehanna country. The province had much work to do: Teedyuscung and other delegates had blamed colonial land acquisition as the basis for their war with Pennsylvania, and demanded that the province assuage the Delaware chiefs on that matter before they would agree to a final treaty.⁸⁶ Events of 1756 had been instructive to visiting

⁸⁵"Journal of the Proceedings of Conrad Weiser with the Indians, to Fort Allen, by his Honour the Governours Order," Nov. 18, 1756, *PA*, 3:66-68.

⁸⁶Teedyuscung accused Pennsylvania of defrauding Delawares out of some of their land rights through the Walking Purchase of 1737, and with the support of Quaker delegates demanded that the province revisit and rectify the specious land deal. This surprise tactic pushed the proprietors into a defensive posture and delayed hopes for an immediate peace treaty indefinitely. Wallace, *King of the Delawares*, 130-36; Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 225-26. For Delaware-Pennsylvania land issues and disputes, see Steven C. Harper, "Delawares and Pennsylvanians After the Walking Purchase," and David L. Preston, "Squatters, Indians, Proprietary Government, and Land in the Susquehanna Valley," in William A. Pencak and Daniel K. Richter, *Friends and Enemies in Penn's Woods: Indians, Colonists, and the Racial Construction of Pennsylvania* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 167-79, 180-200.

Delawares. From a purely social perspective, they had found that the province would protect them while in Easton and other towns, and that Fort Allen offered them little in the way of intimidation. Indeed, the small fort tucked on the north side of the Blue Mountains was quickly becoming a favorite Indian place.

Ongoing treaty deliberations throughout 1757 made Fort Allen a desirable stopping point for Delaware and Iroquois delegates and their retinues. Located just across the Blue Mountains from the busy towns of Easton, Bethlehem, and Reading, the fort offered Indians the favors of British diplomatic hospitality while maintaining the contingency of a quick retreat into Susquehanna country. Before the winter had passed, more of Teedyuscung's people began to filter into Fort Allen's neighborhood. First came seven women and three children from Tioga, who arrived at the fort in mid-February in advance of Teedyuscung's main company. While Orndt was happy to provision the small party, Parsons suggested that they then be sent on to the Moravian brethren's care in Bethlehem, thinking that it might be "very inconvenient" for the women and children to stay at the fort or in Easton to await the delegation.⁸⁷ This comparison of Fort Allen with Easton implies that anti-Indian intolerance might have rendered the fort an inhospitable place for women and children. More likely, Orndt and Parsons wished to avoid a replay of the 1756 mutiny and felt that seven unaccompanied Delaware women might provoke too many distractions among the fort's anxious garrison. Parsons also felt that the women and children might be more comfortable with other Indians until their own party arrived, and Bethlehem still seethed with Indian refugees. With a much larger party scheduled to

⁸⁷Orndt to Parsons, Feb. 18, 1757, *CRP*, 7:429; Parsons to Horsfield, Feb. 20, 1757, Horsfield Papers.

arrive the following month, the province could ill-afford any unpleasantness to befall Teedyuscung's people.

Teedyuscung's main party arrived at Fort Allen at the end of March, though without Teedyuscung himself. The fifty men, women, and children, led by Teedyuscung's two sons and his brother, Captain Harris, proceeded to make themselves at home. "They behave very civil here," reported a relieved Captain Orndt, "They have made Cabbins about 60 perches from the Fort, where they live, and intend to tarry here till the King comes."⁸⁸ Despite the visitors' civility, Parsons remained as anxious about Indians encamped around the fort as he had been about the smaller group of women and children; he requested that the group be sent on to Philadelphia immediately.⁸⁹ Even though the visiting Indians maintained their own shelters, Orndt still had trouble preventing rum-induced problems. His orders forbade liquor sales at the fort, but Indians still found ways to procure it, especially when visiting Easton on official business. On one occasion, when Orndt sent Indian emissaries to Easton with a military escort, the emissaries found so much rum that some of them "stay'd all Night in the Woods, and the remainder went ... to Bethlehem," where Orndt feared "there might easily happen any Misbehaviour."⁹⁰ As long as Indians remained about the fort, anything was possible, including a replay of the previous year's mutiny or an Indian attack.

Denny shared Parsons's apprehensions about the large Indian band at Fort Allen. He ordered Orndt to send the party to Philadelphia immediately upon Teedyuscung's arrival, by way of Bethlehem, where the Moravians would provision them. He

⁸⁸Orndt to Parsons, Mar. 31, 1757, *CRP*, 7:474.

⁸⁹Parsons to Richard Peters, Apr. 3, 1757, *PA*, 3:104.

⁹⁰Orndt to Parsons, *CRP*, 7:474-75.

specifically warned Orndt to prevent Indian loitering, “least any Mischief shou’d happen.”⁹¹ But by the middle of April, Teedyuscung had not yet left the Susquehanna. He needed provisions for the journey and asked Parsons that they be sent to Fort Allen by wagon, where Indians could carry them on to Tioga on horseback.⁹² Fort Allen had become more than a comfortable place for Indian wayfarers. Teedyuscung viewed it as a temporary way-station between his country and the English settlements, and keeping an Indian presence there cemented the fort’s position as an Indian-English outpost of importance. Denny could not turn him down easily. If the Indians refused to travel to Philadelphia and insisted upon staying on the frontier to await Teedyuscung, it was better they wait at Fort Allen than at Easton, where Denny knew they were “always in the Way of strong Liquor & in Danger” from intolerant residents.⁹³

Fort Allen’s position had become complicated: In order to protect the Indians with whom the province must make peace, the fort must endure the presence of large groups of them before peace had been achieved. Even as he advised his representatives to keep Indians near Fort Allen, Denny also warned Parsons and Horsfield to reinforce the fort for a possible attack. Pressure could only be relieved by Teedyuscung’s arrival, but by the end of April he had not yet come to the fort. Parsons told Horsfield to be ready for his arrival and to have dozens of wagons ready to take the “King” and his baggage to Philadelphia.⁹⁴ A few days later the problem took care of itself. The large band encamped near the fort grew tired of waiting for Teedyuscung and left their temporary lodgings,

⁹¹Denny to Parsons, *CRP*, 7:476-77.

⁹²Teedyuscung to Parsons, Apr. 13, 1757, *CRP*, 7:477-78.

⁹³Denny to Horsfield, Apr. 26, 1757, and Denny to [unknown], Apr. 26, 1757, Horsfield Papers.

⁹⁴Parsons to Horsfield, Apr. 28, 1757, Horsfield Papers.

possibly to return home in time to plant corn.⁹⁵ During the first half of 1757, Fort Allen had become an outpost of anxious hospitality, forced by circumstance to keep its enemies close at hand.

In early July, Teedyuscung arrived at Fort Allen. His large band of delegates and followers strained the provisions of the entire region. Teedyuscung brought along 200 men, women, and children, and expected to stay at the fort for six to seven days. During that time he expected to meet 100 Senecas at Fort Allen, and then the whole mass of people would have to be shuttled to Easton, where Denny had agreed to meet with them once again.⁹⁶ Throughout the month, Orndt and his soldiers transferred Indians back and forth between Fort Allen and Easton, a job made less easy by apprehensive settlers and wary Indian emissaries.⁹⁷ During the July conference, 285 Indians came to Easton by way of Fort Allen (112 men, 67 women, and 106 children), though Indians constantly shuttled back and forth between Easton and the fort, and there were always Indians encamped near Fort Allen.⁹⁸ Satisfied by an interim peace arrangement with Denny, Teedyuscung and his party arrived back at Fort Allen on August 13. He and his band took advantage of

⁹⁵William Trent to Denny, May 2, 1757, *PA*, 3:149-50. Some Indians also told Trent that they had heard of white people being killed by Indians and feared English reprisals.

⁹⁶Orndt to Weiser, July 5, 1757, *PA*, 3:207.

⁹⁷The worst threat to peace came when a fifteen-year-old "foolish white boy" shot and wounded William Dattamy, an unaccompanied Indian on his way to Bethlehem. Orndt was forced to remain in Easton with some of his men to prevent Indian-white animosities from flaring, despite the fact that fifty or more Indians remained encamped around Fort Allen. Orndt to Denny, July 8, 1757, *PA*, 3:209-10.

⁹⁸"Report of Indians that Came to Easton by Way of Fort Allen," Aug. 1, 1757, *PA*, 3:210.

the fort's hospitality for several more days before departing, "very glad and joyful," on August 17. Several "sick" families stayed on at Fort Allen.⁹⁹

An unforeseen result of the series of conferences in 1756 and 1757 was to establish the Fort Allen-Bethlehem corridor as a familiar, friendly place for Susquehanna Indians. September found Teedyuscung still in the region, languishing in overcrowded Bethlehem, awaiting his son's return from a diplomatic trip to Ohio. Denny approved the headman's presence there and promised that the province would defray the cost to the Moravian brethren for any expenses Indians might incur. He also authorized Bethlehem's gunsmiths to repair the Indians' arms upon request. Eager to avoid doing anything that "would give Disgust" to the Delawares in the aftermath of their successful peace arrangements, Denny tacitly allowed a constant Delaware presence on the Blue Mountain frontier.¹⁰⁰ Fort Allen's mission had changed, at least temporarily, from protecting the Pennsylvania frontier against Indian incursions to protecting and entertaining those same Indians while visiting the region.

During this period, Pennsylvania's settlers encouraged this policy of fretful hospitality, though many of them did so in spite of their anti-Indian sentiments. Settlers in Northhampton and Berks Counties petitioned Denny in May 1757 to protect them from reported incursions of Ohio Indians. With peace efforts ongoing, settlers feared that the sparsely garrisoned forts and blockhouses would be abandoned entirely. Fort Franklin had never been tenable and was abandoned in November 1756. Forts Norris and Hamilton were still garrisoned, but would not remain so for long. Petitioners asked that

⁹⁹Ormdt to Denny, Aug. 19, 1757, *CRP*, 7:723-24.

¹⁰⁰Denny to Horsfield, Sep. 5, 1757, Horsfield Papers.

more men be sent to the frontiers and that Fort Allen and other forts be maintained.¹⁰¹

This was understandable given the continuing violence in frontier Pennsylvania. In July 1757 several Indians killed and scalped settlers in Lynn Township, the source of one of the petitions. Wetterhold, in Lynn awaiting orders, pursued but could not catch the attackers. He complained that their lack of provisions and ammunition prevented them from acting as a sufficient defense against Indian incursions.¹⁰² With Indian attacks continuing, settlers demanded forts and soldiers in their neighborhoods, either not knowing or not caring that this could encourage a persisting Indian presence in the region. In September, Benjamin Franklin defended the expense of maintaining several forts and blockhouses and over 1,100 men on the frontier, claiming that this policy kept settlers from abandoning their homes altogether.¹⁰³ But if peace could be finalized between the province and belligerent Delawares, any forts that remained in the Pennsylvania backcountry would serve mainly to meet Indian needs rather than to allay settlers' fears.

¹⁰¹Horsfield to Parsons, Apr. 27, 1757, *PA*, 3:142-43; "Petition from Northhampton County," *PA*, 3:151-52; "Petition from the Frontiers," *PA*, 3:153-54. Weiser had reported the untenable state of Fort Franklin in Nov. 1756 and ordered Wetterhold and his men to evacuate the fort and proceed to Lynn Township, Northhampton County, where they remained in May 1757. "Journal of the Proceedings of Conrad Weiser with the Indians, to Fort Allen, by His Honour the Governour's Order," *PA*, 3:66-68. Morale continued to be a problem at the outposts. In Mar. 1757 another near-mutiny took place when a soldier, Hieronymous Faxtor, was discharged for insubordination. He fired his gun at the fort upon leaving and then attacked a passing settler, making it even more curious that the local inhabitants would want a military presence maintained. Ensign Jacob Snider to Parsons, Mar. 3, 1757, Horsfield Papers. By Apr. 1757 Denny had decided that only three forts, Allen, Henry, and Hamilton, would be maintained on the frontier and garrisoned with 100 men each. Denny to Proprietors, Apr. 10, 1757, *PA*, 3:119-20.

¹⁰²Wetterhold to Parsons, July 7, 1757, *PA*, 3:211; Weiser to Denny, July 7, 1757, *PA*, 3:218.

¹⁰³Franklin to the Printer of *The Citizen*, *Franklin Papers*, 7:261-62.

Fort Allen became more of a diplomatic way-station than a defensive outpost in 1758 and as such merited a reduced military complement. In February, Jacob Orndt's garrison consisted of 78 men, though later in the year as few as 50 men occupied the fort.¹⁰⁴ Even the complement of 78 was small compared with that of Fort Augusta (362 men) and smaller forts Henry (105) and Littleton (110).¹⁰⁵ James Burd, Fort Augusta's commander, visited Fort Allen in February 1758 and approved of the fort's garrison and stores, but did not think much of the fort itself. "This is a very poor Stockade, surrounded with Hills, situated on a barren plain," he noted in his journal, and wondered how the fort could hold more than forty men.¹⁰⁶ The location had not been chosen for its strategic value and Franklin's men had worked under pressure, so it should not have surprised Burd that the fort possessed defensive and structural shortcomings.

Because of its diminished military role and poor condition, Fort Allen was in constant danger of being closed throughout 1758. This prompted Northhampton County settlers to issue another petition in March, asking that the fort be maintained to guard the Blue Mountain pass.¹⁰⁷ The settlers need not have worried. Despite the fort's disheveled state and small garrison, Fort Allen would remain necessary as an Indian way station as long as Indians continued to travel through the Blue Mountains on diplomatic missions. Orndt and his men entertained at least two such embassies in March 1758, and the Indian

¹⁰⁴“Position of Troops in Northhampton County, 1758,” *PA*, 3:325; “Return of the Stations of Nine Companies of the Pennsylvania Regiment,” *PA*, 3:339; “Number of Forces,” *PA* 3:341.

¹⁰⁵“Exact State of the Forces between Susquehanna and the Delaware,” and “Number of Forces in the Pay of the Province,” *PA*, 3:340-41.

¹⁰⁶“Journal of James Burd, 1758,” *PA*, 3:355.

¹⁰⁷“Petition from Northhampton County,” *PA*, 3:359-60.

visitors kept the small garrison busy as escorts between the fort and Philadelphia.¹⁰⁸ As early as April 1758, Fort Allen had achieved the status of an official diplomatic checkpoint, “the Place where the Susquehannah Indians are by Treaty obliged first to come to, when they arrive on Our Frontiers,” according to Denny.¹⁰⁹ With its small garrison and ramshackle construction, Fort Allen remained an important stopover for Indians, even as the dangers of Delaware hostilities began to subside.

Indians visiting Fort Allen and living nearby often assisted English authorities in keeping the peace. In doing so, they helped maintain the fort’s status as a welcome haven for traveling Delawares. In April 1758, Indians attacked and killed a group of settlers in Lancaster County. Denny ordered Fort Allen’s garrison to escort friendly Indians from the area and to range the woods for the attackers. Eager to prove his friendship, Teedyuscung sent men to augment Orndt’s garrison.¹¹⁰ Orndt had always employed Indians, usually Christian converts from Bethlehem, to range the countryside around the fort. But by April 1758, it had become more difficult for him to find reliable Indian rangers, mainly because of the regional culture of hospitality and consumerism. Despite his orders to limit liquor sales at the fort, Orndt complained that the Indian rangers were “continually drunk,” having bought “whole Casks of Rum” in Easton.¹¹¹ If Indians could not obtain liquor at the fort, they still expected provisions, knowing full well that with the Seven Years’ War raging on, the English would be bound to supply Indian allies. “There is dayly Indians Passing and Repassing, and they want Suplys from us,” reported John

¹⁰⁸Burd to Orndt, Mar. 7, 1758, *PA*, 3:351; Orndt to Burd, Mar. 29, 1758, *PA*, 3:367.

¹⁰⁹Denny to James Abercrombie, Apr. 7, 1758, *WJP*, 2:814.

¹¹⁰Robert Strettell to Horsfield, Apr. 14, 1758, Horsfield Papers.

¹¹¹John Edwin to [unknown], Apr. 23, 1758, *CRP*, 8:98-99.

Bull, Orndt's successor as Fort Allen's commander.¹¹² Bull supplied his Indian visitors, but seemed confused as to how and whether the policy should be continued.¹¹³ However, Fort Allen's position as a diplomatic station made such provisioning a necessity, at least for the moment. Continuing dangers in the region mandated friendly relations with Indian visitors.

Ironically, maintaining Fort Allen as a friendly outpost to conduct diplomacy helped grow a regional consumer culture that actually hindered diplomatic efforts. Quaker interpreter Charles Thomson and Moravian missionary Christian Frederick Post encountered this problem during a diplomatic trip to meet with Teedyuscung in Wyoming in June 1758. As the diplomats left Fort Allen, a small party of Indians warned them that the path to Wyoming was too dangerous and that they should turn back. A bit farther along the trail, the diplomats met Teedyuscung himself, who repeated the warnings and convinced them to return with him to Fort Allen. On the way back they met Gabriel Loquus, a Delaware whom Post and Thomson had last seen at the fort. When Teedyuscung found out that Loquus had brought some rum along, the Indians disappeared for an all-night drinking session. Post and Thomson were disappointed at this unexpected delay in their mission, and the next day they enquired at the fort to find out where Loquus had purchased his liquor. Hans Bowman, a trader who operated five miles from the fort, had "given" Loquus five gallons of whiskey a few days earlier. Outraged, Bull sent a few soldiers to remind Bowman that selling liquor to the Indians was prohibited and could cause civil unrest and violence. The trader replied that the liquor

¹¹²Orndt had been promoted to Major and given command of the region around Fort Allen.

¹¹³Bull to Peters, June 14, 1758, *PA*, 3:423.

was a present for Loquus, that he would give gifts to whomever he pleased, and that not even the troops could stop him. Bull's inability to enforce his liquor regulations was annoying enough, but the incident also interfered with provincial diplomacy. Post and Thomson hoped to obtain Teedyuscung's help in punishing French-allied Minisinks. Loitering and drinking at Fort Allen would cost the province unexpected and costly delays.¹¹⁴

Throughout the summer of 1758, hundreds of Indians moved through the Blue Mountains, many enjoying lengthy stays at the fort. On June 29, Teedyuscung and fifty Delawares and Iroquois arrived at Fort Allen, hoping to meet with Denny at Germantown a few days later.¹¹⁵ Bull sent the entire party on to Bethlehem under escort, ordering his men to hand them over to Horsfield and return. With Indians lingering around the fort in search of trade and alcohol, Bull could hardly afford to weaken his force by giving up men for escort duty.¹¹⁶ Orndt had already lost a detachment of men to Forbes's expedition against Fort Duquesne, and Bull's garrison at Fort Allen had been reduced to only thirty men.¹¹⁷ Pennsylvania had begun to devalue what was left of the defensive chain of forts in favor of more proactive measures against the French and their Indian allies. From then on, Fort Allen would host more Indians than Pennsylvanians.

After a short conference in Philadelphia, Teedyuscung and his party returned to Fort Allen in mid-July. He again met Christian Frederick Post, passing through on his way to elicit Indian help at Fort Alleghany. Teedyuscung tried to keep Post at the fort, claiming that the French would surely capture him if he made the trip. Besides, the

¹¹⁴“Report of Charles Thomson and F. Post, of a Journey in 1758”, *PA*, 3:412-22.

¹¹⁵Lieutenant Samuel Price to Denny, June 29, 1758, *PA*, 3:429.

¹¹⁶Horsfield to Denny, July 4, 1758, *PA*, 3:436.

¹¹⁷Hunter, *Forts on the Pennsylvania Frontier*, 252-53.

chief's son Han Jacob would soon return from Allegheny, making Post's diplomatic trip there unnecessary.¹¹⁸ Teedyuscung had positioned himself at Fort Allen and hoped to use the location as a base to influence diplomatic and military initiatives. When Han Jacob arrived, Teedyuscung forwarded his findings to Jacob Orndt. According to Han Jacob, the French were warning western Indians about British duplicity. "The English Does give you no Knives or Swords, or Guns, neither Powder nor Lead," the French had told Indians near Allegheny. According to French emissaries, what the French gave as presents, the English sold as trade goods. French agents always tried to drive wedges between the British and their Indian allies, but in relaying this message to Denny, Teedyuscung was thinking more about Fort Allen than about Fort Allegheny or any other outpost. Specifically, he wished to use the French threat to elicit the use of Fort Allen as an arms depot for Indians. Of course, Teedyuscung promised to stand by the English, but he made it clear that he would be helped in these efforts if the province would send more powder and lead to Fort Allen to supply any Indians he sent there.¹¹⁹ Many could be expected, especially with more treaty talks scheduled at Easton for late 1758. On September 12, Orndt informed Denny that 128 Indians had arrived at Fort Allen "and intended to stay there."¹²⁰

With the date of the new treaty conference fast approaching, Denny moved to limit the hospitable drinking culture near the fort and, even more importantly, at the conference locations. Soon after Post and Thomson complained about liquor sales near Fort Allen, Denny posted another prohibition threatening imprisonment for anyone who

¹¹⁸"Journal of Frederick Post, 1758," *PA*, 3:521.

¹¹⁹Orndt to Denny, July 24, 1758, *PA*, 3:490-91.

¹²⁰Orndt to Denny, Sep. 12, 1758, *CRP*, 8:167.

sold liquor to Teedyuscung and his party during their summer visits.¹²¹ But as more Indians poured into Northhampton County in August and September, individual traders and tavern keepers continued to supply Indians with liquor, using their non-official status as “private persons” to skirt regulations. Denny knew perfectly well that profit was not always the motive, and that some native and Pennsylvanian parties could gain much by the “Prejudice and Hindrance of the Business” at important treaty conferences. To prevent such disruptions at Easton, Denny forbade liquor gifts and sales entirely, “upon any Pretence whatsoever,” except by authorized Indian agents.¹²² Many Indians came to the conferences for amusement and the promise of liquor and gifts, and Denny could not hope to prohibit them entirely. The province could, however, begin to change the role of Fort Allen from a purely defensive outpost and diplomatic transfer point into a place that took better advantage of a steady supply of Indian consumers.

During the Easton Conference of October 1758, Denny surprised the several Indians present by announcing that Fort Allen would soon become a trading post. In April 1758, the province passed an act enabling a board of Indian Commissioners to establish trading posts where they thought most fit. Placed at or near manned forts and overseen by Indian agents, they would prevent “Abuses in the Indian Trade” and supply “Indians, Friends and Allies of Great Britain” with “Goods at more easy Rates.” Hopefully, this would help cement the favorable Indian-white relations established at Easton.¹²³ Fort Augusta at Shamokin had opened a trading post in May 1758, and in October Denny announced to Teedyuscung and many conference attendees that

¹²¹“Advertisement Against Selling Rum to Indians,” *PA*, 3:437.

¹²²“Proclamation Against Selling Rum to the Indians,” *PA*, 3:519.

¹²³Hunter, *Forts on the Pennsylvania Frontier*, 254-55.

Shamokin was open for business. "The Indians may be Supplied at the most reasonable Rates with any goods they may want," he announced, "And the best Prices will be given to you for such Skins, Furs, and Peltry as you shall bring them." Another trading post would soon be opened at Fort Allen, where Indian consumers could "depend upon it" that Indian agents would ensure the "Strictest Justice" in all dealings there.¹²⁴ Robert Tuckness became Fort Allen's first Indian agent on December 11; by December 21 "Quantities of Indian Goods" had been shipped to the post, which Denny hoped would please the Susquehanna people and attach them firmly to Britain's interests.¹²⁵ It was also hoped that an authorized post at Fort Allen would reduce the influence of unscrupulous traders in the region and transform Indian traffic at the post from a financial drain into a profitable coexistence. Far from its original purpose of providing safety for Blue Mountain settlers, Fort Allen became dependent on a regular Indian presence.

During its short tenure as a trading post, Fort Allen enjoyed a relatively robust business. From December 1758 through May 1760, the Pennsylvania Commissioners for Indian Affairs recorded sales amounting to just over £2,333.¹²⁶ According to entries in the Fort Allen Daybook for the period of October 1759 through April 1760, the trading

¹²⁴"Conference with the Indians Held at Easton," *Pennsylvania Treaties*, 451.

¹²⁵Hunter, *Forts on the Pennsylvania Frontier*, 255; Denny to Assembly, Dec. 21, 1758, *CRP*, 8:238.

¹²⁶This amount barely exceeded the £2,313 brought in at Fort Augusta for the same period, though both of the smaller forts paled in comparison with the center of western Pennsylvania trade, the new post at Fort Pitt. From December 1758 through May 1760, Fort Pitt recorded returns of over £10,166. "Indian Trade at Fort Augusta, Pitsberg, and Fort Allen," Cash Book, Commissioners for Indian Affairs, Apr. 28, 1758 – Apr. 19, 1763, Simon Gratz Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

post offered a wide variety of goods for settlers and Indians alike.¹²⁷ But economics dictated that the post's tenure was likely to be short. However much the posts might have contributed to easing tensions between the province and Pennsylvania's Indians and in meeting visiting natives' material needs, the returns never overcame the costs of goods, shipping, and maintaining enough soldiers in the field to protect the trade.¹²⁸ Also during this period, Fort Allen's diplomatic role diminished in favor of its new economic pursuits. Sir William Johnson's Indian Department had taken over most Indian diplomacy by 1758, and Easton would host only one more major Indian conference in 1761. By January 1760, the province had further reduced Fort Allen's complement to 2 officers, 2 sergeants, and 21 privates. Fort Allen even proved unable to serve as an effective outpost for equipping Indian diplomatic expeditions. By the summer of 1760, inexperienced leaders, desertions, and mismanagement of stores had made Fort Allen nearly unsustainable.¹²⁹

By late 1760, the province began to consider closing Fort Allen. There was certainly no shortage of Indians near the fort; in fact, a hundred Indians arrived there on August 6, on their way to Philadelphia. The fort's commander, Lt. Andrew Wackerberg,

¹²⁷Items sold at Fort Allen were typical of trading posts throughout the Northeast, and show the depth to which European trade had infiltrated native material culture. European clothing and textiles are well represented in the Daybook accounts, both utilitarian (shirts and strouds) and fancy ("nonesopretties"). Tools, construction materials, cooking implements, guns, ammunition, decorations, animal tack, locks, and even mouse traps were all traded and sold at the post. In return, the traders took cash and every kind of peltry available, mainly deer and beaver, but also mink, martin, and panther. Fort Allen Daybook, Indian Affairs, Simon Gratz Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

¹²⁸Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 241-42.

¹²⁹Hunter, *Forts on the Pennsylvania Frontier*, 255-56.

kept native travelers supplied with provisions and rum, despite orders to the contrary.¹³⁰¹³¹
But Fort Allen had outlived its usefulness and the Assembly refused to fund it beyond January 1761.¹³¹ Peters ordered Horsfield to pay off and discharge Fort Allen's garrison and take custody of the arms, ammunition, and stores left at the post.¹³² On April 27, Horsfield declared the fort closed and returned the land to the Moravian brethren.¹³³ In a final ignominy, Indians attending the Easton conference in August 1761 raided Fort Allen, hoping to loot its remaining stores, but they found nothing there but a few squatters, one of whom was Lt. Wackerberg.¹³⁴

Unlike Forts Michilimackinac, Niagara, Loudoun, and Chartres, Fort Allen has not been restored or recreated for present-day visitors. Only the fort's well remains to mark the spot, in modern Weissport. A historical marker also testifies to the fort's location; until fairly recently, the site faced a longstanding inn called the Fort Allen Hotel. This could not have been a more fitting tribute to the strange history of the small Blue Mountain outpost. The fort was designed to stage an Indian invasion, but instead became as much an Indian place as a British one. Hospitality defined the fort's ultimate role in Indian-white relations and infused its mission with anxiety and confusion. Fort Allen never suffered an attack, except by some of its own garrison. It never served as the

¹³⁰Ibid., 257.

¹³¹CRP, 8:514; *Pennsylvania Archives*, 8th ser., 6:586-87.

¹³²Peters to Horsfield, Jan. 17, 1761, Horsfield Papers. Not much was left to salvage from Fort Allen after the garrison had plundered the stores in 1760. Some of the few remaining guns were broken as were several of the tools. Horsfield sold the utilitarian goods for just over £9 and sent the guns and ammunition to Philadelphia. "Account of Ammunition Stores &ca in Fort Allen, Taken the 21st Sept. 1761," Horsfield Papers.

¹³³Joseph Mortimer Levering, *History of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 1742-1892* (Bethlehem: Times Publishing Co., 1903), 370.

¹³⁴Horsfield to James Hamilton, Sep. 3, 1761, Horsfield Papers.

base for Indian punitive expeditions. Missionaries, not military planners, determined its location. For a brief period, Fort Allen even served as an illegal tavern, of sorts. But its use by Indian visitors made it a link in the chain of Indian reciprocal relations. Instead of a military post for keeping Indians and Europeans apart, it became a diplomatic post that brought them together. In this respect, Fort Allen was not alone. Throughout North America; outposts that were meant to introduce European culture and resolve into Indian country had their identities reshaped by the complexities of intercultural contact. Fort Allen became an example of the transformational nature of Indian-European contact and coexistence in the North American backcountry.

In Franklin's autobiography, the great man seemed embarrassed by the rough little fort he and his men built during the Delaware War. But, of course, he never enjoyed the post's hospitality. Had Teedyuscung left a memoir, his description of Fort Allen might have been more agreeable.

CHAPTER THREE

THE GREATEST MART: Food, Drink and Interdependence at Michilimackinac, 1761-1796

By the end of the British occupation of the Straits of Mackinac, observers who had lived in the region long enough might have been surprised to hear Kegeweskam, a powerful and influential Ottawa chief, complain that his peoples' lives there were nearly over. He described his settlement of L'Arbre Croche, once a bountiful agricultural center, as a dead place, a sad remnant to be pitied. He professed hope that the subsistence gained from their exhausted cornfields and whatever fish they could catch would be enough to save his people, but he feared that the tide had turned. Once, the French and British occupants of the Straits depended on Indian knowledge and food to survive. Now Kegeweskam claimed that his people would need help from the Europeans or die starving in their own land.¹

Kegeweskam's complaints were probably overstated. L'Arbre Croche remained a prominent corn producing post until well into the nineteenth century. But the chief's descriptions leave the reader with an unmistakable impression of loss. It would be easy to mistake this turn of fortune as the result of an inevitable process of invasion, dislocation, and oppression. The arrival of the European fur trade and its supplies of manufactured trade goods, unfamiliar to Indians but quickly adopted and appreciated, changed the

¹ Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society, *Collections and Researches* (Lansing, MI: The Society, 1877-1929), 493-94 (hereafter cited as *MPHC*).

logistics of everyday life at the Straits. By the end of the seventeenth century, Indians of the Great Lakes basin had adapted their lifeways around the European trade. In a teleological view, from the point of view of the survivors, this European alteration of native lives in the Mackinac Straits can appear to have been an unstoppable, inevitable cultural juggernaut. But this was not the reality experienced by the Indians themselves; the Ottawas, Ojibwas, and others who knew and appreciated the natural gifts of the region centuries before the French and British ever saw the Great Lakes.

Northern Great Lakes Indians were influenced negatively by European expansion in the region, but the story of the British occupation of Fort Michilimackinac is not only one of Indian loss. The fur trade did help bring about the partial dissolution of Indian traditions and power in the region, and the fort maintained by British troops for thirty-five years protected that trade and its tradesmen and *voyageurs*. But Mackinac's forts were hardly engines of intimidation for the Indians at the Straits. Rather, the forts acted as markets, drawing Indians from hundreds of miles around to trade their furs, buy trade goods and provisions, and renew their reciprocal trade agreements with European authorities. Indians valued the trade for the advantages that European goods gave them, and demanded trading posts and traders in Indian country. Though most trading took place in the natives' villages, traders kept houses near the post. Fort commandants also gave gifts to Indian visitors to maintain friendship and reciprocity in the Great Lakes economic system. In the French period, visiting Indians probably made little distinction between the small French fort and native palisaded villages they had seen in their travels. During the British period, larger garrisons and more impressive edifices were meant to impress and awe Indians, especially during the wars of the late eighteenth century in

which Indians and Europeans allied with and fought against each other. Indian awe proved more difficult to elicit than many Europeans expected. Throughout the entire British period at Michilimackinac, Indians always outnumbered Europeans, reminding the newcomers constantly of their importance in the region.

Efforts to procure food at remote outposts like Michilimackinac displayed this localized Indian-European social and economic parity. European military and diplomatic efforts to manage trade and gain advantages over Indians in the Great Lakes basin certainly loomed large in deciding the outcome of the contest for cultural supremacy in North America. However, local, everyday concerns like provisioning complicate the picture. Large-scale naval freighting on the lakes became viable during the British occupation of Michilimackinac, making outside provisioning much more efficient than during the earlier French tenure at the straits. But, despite the best efforts of British quartermasters to provision the lake posts, outside supplies could not fulfill all the dietary needs of Michilimackinac. The British post at the straits contained over one hundred soldiers, was almost four hundred miles from Detroit, and greeted many thousands of native visitors every summer. Throughout the British occupation Europeans depended in part on Indian foodways and native food suppliers. At the same time, the fur trade changed native material culture significantly. This was especially true with the introduction of alcohol, a trade good that only Europeans could supply, and one Indians increasingly demanded on their trips to the post. Food and drink defined an interdependent relationship between British newcomers and natives at Michilimackinac.

that complicates later arguments for economic determinism and inevitable Indian demise.²

Many of the groups that would eventually call the Mackinac region home were Algonquian-speaking peoples displaced by the great Iroquois expansion west and north during the mid-seventeenth century. Iroquois warfare nearly destroyed Huron culture, and scattered other Iroquoian and Algonquian groups into the Great Lakes basin and further west. In some cases, lifeways and traditions merged in multiethnic refugee villages, creating the ethnic, linguistic, and political divisions later identified and redefined by the earliest European observers. In other cases, Great Lakes Indians maintained traditional lands and kinship networks in the face of these demographic changes. This dramatic profusion of cultures in the mid-seventeenth century makes describing traditional foodways in the region problematic. All descriptions of the ways Ottawas, Ojibwas, Potawatomis, Nippisings, and other native peoples of the Great Lakes region found, traded, created, and prepared food are based upon the accounts and observations of early French missionaries, traders, and adventurers.³ But generalizations can still be made about pre-contact Indian foodways from the common practices that survived to the contact period. To one degree or another, almost all Indians hunted, fished, and cultivated

²For a concise overview of the diets and foodways of soldiers manning forts throughout the trans-Appalachian west, including the problems encountered in transporting, storing, and procuring provisions, see McConnell, *Army and Empire*, 101-13.

³On Indian refugees in the seventeenth century, see White, *The Middle Ground*, 1-49. White's description of post-1650 Great Lakes Indian societies as fragmented refugee groups has been challenged effectively by Heidi Bohaker. She argues that Anishinaabe expressive symbols imply kinship networks and traditions that predate and postdate 1650, revealing a much more stable native social landscape in the region than proposed by White. "Nindoodemag': The Significance of Algonquian Kinship Networks in the Eastern Great Lakes Region, 1600-1701," *WMQ*, 3rd ser. 63:1 (Jan. 2006): 23-52.

plants for sustenance. In the ecologically fragile world of the upper Great Lakes, with its six-to-eight months of freezing temperatures and snowfall measured in meters, Indians worked both with and against nature to provide sustenance, using methods honed and tested over many centuries.

Anthropologists identify prehistoric Indians as horticulturists, agriculturists, or gatherers to describe how they obtained their vegetable food. However, any implications of agricultural lethargy or primitivism are misplaced in describing people who had cultivated plants for thousands of years, nearly as long as Europeans. Archaeologists have shown that people of the Early Woodland Adena culture cultivated squash well over two thousand years ago. Squash was one of the nutritional “three sisters” crucial to later Eastern Woodland foodways. After about 100 B.C.E., their Hopewell successors carried on and expanded horticulture, planting larger garden plots and living in sedentary villages. Mississippian groups expanded even further into the cultivation of large fields of beans and corn, the remaining two “sisters” of the trio.⁴

Maize seemed especially important to contact-era Indians, according to the reports of early European observers. It could be planted easily and required little maintenance. Clear-burning fields provided easy fertilization, and as seed the maize kernel was highly reproductive; one kernel could provide up to two hundred kernels for consumption. Combined with squash and beans, maize provided a combination of essential nutrients unsurpassed in any culture or continent.⁵ Even so, Indian agriculture

⁴R. Douglas Hurt, *Indian Agriculture in America: Prehistory to Present* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1987), 11-15.

⁵Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country*, 54-56; William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 41-46.

was not completely reliable or assuredly bountiful. Untimely frosts, insect infestation, and drought could all affect crop productivity. Early European visitors may have overstated bountiful native crop yields in their exuberant relations to the Old World.⁶ Still, maize, beans and squash proved to be hardy and dependable crops in supporting both sedentary and mobile lifeways in the rugged country north and east of the Great Lakes, and in most other parts of eastern North America.

Indians augmented their vegetable crops with wild game and fish. Especially in winter, this provided the only available source of animal protein because Indians did not domesticate food animals.⁷ Animals with thick, warm hides like bear, beaver, and deer were most sought after because they provided warmth as well as nourishment. This would change when the introduction of the European fur trade altered hunting patterns, turning a practical necessity into an economic priority. Indians used assigned hunting grounds to avoid confrontations with other native groups and to keep from over-hunting animal populations. Native hunters employed shooting, spearing and trapping, and the prodigious skills involved made expert hunters highly valued in their societies.⁸ Fishing was no less important, and sedentary villages sprang up near especially bountiful rivers and lakes. This was especially true in the fresh waters of the Great Lakes basin, where fish populations had grown and evolved over millennia, providing a diverse source of nutrition. Relatively low Indian populations prevented excessive fishing and hunting, and

⁶Sissel Schroeder, "Maize Productivity in the Eastern Woodlands and Great Plains of North America," *American Antiquity* 64:2 (1999): 502.

⁷Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country*, 57.

⁸W. Vernon Kinietz, *The Indians of the Western Great Lakes, 1615-1760* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ann Arbor Paperbacks, 1965), 236-39; 322.

barring natural factors such as storms and droughts, Indian hunting and fishing worked as part of a well-balanced ecosystem.

In Great Lakes Indian societies, food production and processing was usually the domain of native women. Women grew vegetables and processed meat and fish for local consumption and for sale to travelers and traders. They also produced craft items and processed skins for the fur trade, making them indispensable to the wide-ranging Indian trade networks that developed long before the arrival of Europeans. This important role in trade and local economics gave women exceptional influence in their societies. After the arrival of Europeans, Great Lakes native women sold provisions to traders, travelers, and soldiers, and were important consumers in the emergent European trade.⁹

The weather in the region surrounding the Upper Great Lakes challenged even the hardiest Indians and Europeans. Snowstorms buried paths and villages, and driving winds made travel difficult or impossible. Winter travel was always dangerous, especially over frozen lakes and rivers that could break open without warning. In the Michilimackinac region, winter can come as early as late September, and snow in April is not uncommon. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, during the period some call the Little Ice Age, average temperatures were possibly even lower than at present, and winters may

⁹Lucy Eldersveld Murphy, *A Gathering of Rivers: Indians, Métis, and Mining in the Western Great Lakes, 1737-1832* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 29-30.

have lasted longer.¹⁰ The soil was, and still is, sandy and rocky near the lakeshores, though the great forests of the interior portions of the two Michigan peninsulas provided fertile ground for planting.

Rivers in the Great Lakes basin, especially the Ottawa and the St. Lawrence, were major highways that made journeys of many hundreds of miles feasible during the warmer months. Before European contact, Indians in the area seemed to coalesce in small villages near lakes and rivers; archaeologists have studied several prehistoric and protohistoric fishing villages on the shores of Lakes Superior, Michigan, and Huron, attesting to the importance of the big lakes as a source of sustenance. More tantalizing is evidence that on the eve of European contact in the region, large parts of the Upper Great Lakes region were empty of people, following the dissolution of the advanced Mississippian culture that dominated central North America for centuries.¹¹ This was the world that French explorers found when they entered the region in the early seventeenth century, and unbeknownst to European or Indian, it was a world on the verge of exceptional demographic change.

¹⁰For an overview of this period of global climate change and its relationship to historical events in Europe, see Brian M. Fagan, *The Little Ice Age: How Climate made History, 1300-1850* (Boulder, CO: Basic Books, 2000), esp. 129-47 for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For the problems of determining historical climate change and conditions, see Reid A. Bryson and Christine Padoch, "On the Climates of History," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 10:4 (Spring 1980): 583-97. In the absence of documentation, historical climate change can be determined through archaeological means, especially through the analysis of tree rings, forest fire ash stratigraphy, pollen and lichen analysis, ice cores, etc. For a Great Lakes region example, see James S. Clark, "Fire and Climate Change During the Last 750 Years in Northwestern Minnesota," *Ecological Monographs* 60:2 (1990): 135-59.

¹¹David S. Brose, "Late Prehistory of the Upper Great Lakes Area," in *Handbook of North American Indians*, gen. ed. William C. Sturtevant, vol. 15: *Northeast*, ed. Bruce G. Trigger (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 577-79.

French explorers and missionaries entered the Great Lakes region almost simultaneously. Recollect missionary Joseph Le Caron attempted to start a mission near Thunder Bay in 1615, and explorer Étienne Brûlé, an associate of fur entrepreneur Samuel de Champlain, reached Sault Sainte Marie by 1620. They were the first of a stream of French adventurers, priests, and fur traders that would change dramatically the way Indians of the upper Great Lakes lived their daily lives. French visitors quickly recognized the strategic importance of Michilimackinac, as Jesuit missionary Claude Dablon explained in 1670: "It is situated exactly in the strait connecting the Lake of the Hurons and that of the Illinois, and forms the key and the door, so to speak, for all the peoples of the South, as does the Sault for those of the North; for in these regions there are only those two passages by water for very many Nations."¹²

But Dablon also noted that the Indians' fascination with Michilimackinac had more to do with food procurement than with transportation, and described the many different varieties of fish that the Indians found there. This included three kinds of trout, the largest of which was so "monstrous" that native residents had trouble eating them. An Indian could spear 40 or 50 fish in a few hours, which may have been why the local Ottawas, Ojibwas and Hurons thought that Michilimackinac was the "native country" of all fish.¹³ In addition to fish, Jesuits in the New France missions noted the wondrous availability of corn; in 1639 missionary François du Peron described Hurons bringing the priests gifts of squash, bread, and "more corn than if we had broad lands."¹⁴ Indeed, since Cartier's explorations in the 1530s, French visitors had commented on the amazing

¹²JR, 55:155.

¹³JR, 55:155-57.

¹⁴JR, 15:157.

proclivity of corn agriculture among many Indian groups.¹⁵ Jesuit priests did not write much about agriculture in the Michilimackinac area in the seventeenth century, although by 1710 Jesuit missionary Antoine Silvy reported that “maize grows very well” on the south shore of the straits, and that the Potawatomis of the Lake Michigan islands “sow corn and supply the needs of Michilimackinac.”¹⁶ However, by then a fort and a mission had already come and gone at the Straits, and the fur trade increasingly determined the nature of both European and Indian existence there.

Excellent fishing, arable land for growing corn, and lake geography was reason enough for Indians to gather at Michilimackinac, but the fur trade and Christian missions were additional inducements.¹⁷ When Jacques Marquette founded the mission of St. Ignace on the north shore of the Straits in 1669, he brought his Huron followers with him from Sault Sainte Marie, with the full knowledge that other potential converts would come to Michilimackinac for their own reasons. Dablon knew that “the abundance of fish, and the excellence of the soil for raising Indian corn, have ever proved a very powerful attraction for the tribes of these regions” and Indians would soon be “turning their eyes toward so advantageous a location as this,” making Michilimackinac a ripe target for both traders and proselytizers.¹⁸ Establishment of the mission at St. Ignace and of French Fort de Baude, built there in 1690, was determined by the availability of food in the region and the Indian refugees who would soon migrate there.¹⁹

¹⁵Hurt, *Indian Agriculture*, 33.

¹⁶Antoine Silvy, *Letters from North America*, trans. Ivy Alice Dickson (Belleville, Ont.: Mika Publishing Co., 1980), 161-63.

¹⁷White, *Middle Ground*, 23.

¹⁸*JR*, 55:159-61.

¹⁹White, *Middle Ground*, 42-49.

Fort de Baude, the first fort at the Mackinac straits, was primarily an attempt to hold the area for France as a fur entrepôt before the British tried the same thing. English companies had already established a competitive post on James Bay to handle the northern fur trade, and wished to steer as many beaver skins as possible through the Great Lakes and friendly Iroquois country to Albany. By 1694, when Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac took over as commandant of Fort de Baude, he commanded 200 soldiers, the largest French garrison ever at Michilimackinac. This might have intimidated rival British traders, but probably did not trouble the hundreds of Ottawas, Ojibwas, and Potawatomis who lived nearby, or the thousands of other Indians who came to the straits to trade their beaver pelts for European goods and provisions annually. Indeed, Cadillac never felt safe there because of the remoteness of the post and the clear superiority of the Indians in numbers and practical advantages. "With a little Indian corn," he argued in 1700, "These people have no difficulty in traversing two hundred leagues to come and take some one's life by stealth, and when we want to get their lands, we are obliged to provide ourselves with stores of all kinds and to make great preparations."²⁰ Cadillac applied for and received permission to move the post to Detroit, taking as many of his Indian suppliers/customers with him as would consent to go, but the natural advantages of the Mackinac Straits in geography and the availability of food kept *voyageurs*, traders, and Indians flocking to the region.

Indians resorting to Michilimackinac for food attracted French traders and soldiers there because of the fur trade, the defining economic concern in Canada since the sixteenth century. Fur trading had moved far into the St. Lawrence Valley by the early

²⁰MPHC, 33:97.

seventeenth century. It introduced new kinds of textiles, tools, weapons, and sundry items into native material culture, and drew Indians into an intercontinental trade system as spenders and consumers. Indians were not necessarily dependent upon the new trade, however much they seemed attached to it. European trade goods replaced similar native items, and the trade itself reinforced Indian notions of social reciprocity and mutual obligations. In fact, the European trade, often configured as a gift exchange from the Indians' points of view, and the actual diplomatic gift giving that went with it, defined the give-and-take nature of both Indian and European alliances in the seventeenth century.²¹

²¹Recent studies have shown that the fur trade was important to native lives before European contact, and after the coming of Europeans it provided arenas for cultural conflict and accommodation into the nineteenth century and beyond. Gender roles, spirituality, demographic change, and consumerism flowed together to create vital new cultural forms and to affect existing kinship, social, and political relationships. Women's history has especially transformed our understanding of the social nature of fur trade relationships, revealing the fundamental domestic and public roles played by women. The groundbreaking works in this new understanding of the trade are Jennifer S. H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country*, (1980; new ed. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), and Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983). For recent studies see Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), and Bruce M. White, "The Woman Who Married a Beaver: Trade Patterns and Gender Roles in the Ojibwa Fur Trade," *Ethnohistory* 46:1 (Winter 1999): 109-47. Bruce White has argued for a nuanced view of trade that emphasizes native spiritual views about goods. He shows that western Great Lakes Indians thought French trade goods, especially metal goods and guns, were imbued with powerful spirits and possessed greater-than-human powers. Ojibwas desired goods for both ritual and practical reasons, and made little distinction between those values. "Encounters With Spirits: Ojibwa and Dakota Theories about the French and Their Merchandise," *Ethnohistory* 41:3 (Summer 1994): 369-405. For classic studies of the fur trade, see Arthur J. Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade: Their Role as Hunters, Trappers, and Middlemen in the Lands Southwest of Hudson's Bay, 1660-1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), and Harold Adams Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History*, new ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

Michilimackinac created natural opportunities for the northern fur trade and its Montreal-based traders because it prevented furs from north of Lake Superior being transported further south in the Great Lakes. There they might have ended up being sold at rival French forts Niagara or Frontenac on Lake Ontario or, even worse from the French perspective, sold illicitly to British traders.²² The fur trade also brought new Indian groups to the Straits region; Marquette's Huron converts moved away from St. Ignace after 1701, but other groups had moved into the region after 1650, including Ottawas, Nipissings, and Potawatomis who worked as middlemen in the transportation of furs.²³ The French fur trade may have dominated the Canadian economy during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but it was always a shaky endeavor offering large net receipts but somewhat meager profits. This may explain why French authorities were slow to reestablish a fort at the Straits until 1715, and hesitant to garrison the post with more than a token company throughout the eighteenth century.²⁴ But from Indians' perspective, the trade changed their material lives in many ways, and introduced them to alcohol, a new and troubling consumable commodity.

French residents of the New World enjoyed brandy mainly as a pleasant accompaniment to food and as a brace against fatigue and cold, damp weather. Indians preferred liquor for its qualities as an intoxicant for recreation, in spiritual and mourning rituals and practices, and to escape the pressures and boredom of life.²⁵ Indian

²²W. J. Eccles, *France in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 86.

²³White, *Middle Ground*, 105-06.

²⁴After expenses and percentages for middlemen, the profit of the French fur trade may have been only a few hundred thousand livres a year, to be divided amongst many investors. Eccles, *France in America*, 126.

²⁵Peter C. Mancall, *Deadly Medicine*, 63-84; James Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 64-67.

drunkenness often disrupted village life and backwoods social interactions, and violence and lawlessness commonly ensued. French missionaries deplored the introduction of liquor into native lifeways and always argued for brandy's restriction among Indians, but once it was in place there was little they could do about it. "How deprive them of it entirely?" wondered French captain Pierre Noyan in 1730, "It has become the basis of their religion! These superstitious men can no longer recover from their diseases, unless they make festivals with brandy ... they must have it, at whatever cost."²⁶

Intoxication also served as a valid excuse for violence and thievery among some Indian groups, who believed that intoxicants transported them to other worlds or places where the normal restrictions of reciprocity and responsibility did not hold. "When our Savages have received an injury from any one," explained Jesuit priest Jacques Bruyan in 1669, "They get half drunk and do with impunity all that passion suggests to them. All the satisfaction one receives from them is embraced in two words: 'He was drunk; he had lost his reason.'"²⁷ Indians so desired brandy and other spirituous liquors that its value as a trade commodity made it irresistible to traders both honest and illicit; indeed, in some cases Indians would trade almost anything for it, and intoxicated men were easily cheated.²⁸

But some felt that the missionaries overstated their complaints against the liquor trade. Cadillac, whose conflicts with the Jesuits were many, argued that if all the priests' complaints were compiled into a single volume, "a man's life would not suffice to get through the reading of it." He charged Jesuit missionaries with using the liquor trade as

²⁶MPHC, 34:75.

²⁷JR, 53:257.

²⁸Eccles, *France in America*, 55-56.

an excuse for their own conversion failures.²⁹ But Indians cared little about the squabbles of French missionaries and soldiers. From the natives' point of view, alcohol was an important new ingestible trade good that served many of their needs despite its attendant social problems, and they had as much right to purchase and consume it as anyone else. Indians could buy their liquor from traders in their villages, but also expected to find it at the trading posts along with other goods. Because of the fur trade, Michilimackinac became a place for native consumers to acquire strong drink as well as provisions and useful European goods.³⁰

After the conclusion of the very expensive Queen Anne's War, the potential profits of the fur trade seemed a sufficient inducement to reestablish a post at Michilimackinac. This time the fort was built on the south shore of the Straits, opposite the decaying ruins of Fort de Baude at St. Ignace, probably in 1715. Fort Michilimackinac enjoyed four decades of relative peace, despite supplying French and Indian attackers during the Fox War of 1716 and King George's War in the 1740s. Only a small garrison served the post, never more than twenty or thirty soldiers and officers, and

²⁹MPHC, 33:142-43.

³⁰During the French regime at Michilimackinac, alcohol ranked fifth among trade goods kept in inventory when catalogued by use type. Clothing was the premier trade good, commanding 72% of trade expenditures at the post. Hunting implements (including guns, flints, and ammunition) ranked second, adornments ranked third, and cooking and eating implements ranked fourth. Brandy and wine accounted for 3.07% of expenditures for the period 1715-1760. These ratios were typical of Great Lakes area posts. Dean L. Anderson, "The Flow of European Trade Goods into the Western Great Lakes Region, 1715-1760," in *The Fur Trade Revisited: Selected Papers of the Sixth North American Fur Trade Conference, Mackinac Island, Michigan, 1991*, eds., Jennifer S. H. Brown, W. J. Eccles, and Donald P. Heldman (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1994), 107.

the fort itself was a small, lightly stockaded complex built much like an Indian fort.³¹

Fort Michilimackinac's neighbors were the native groups that had been settling in the area since the 1650s. Ottawas had lived at the Straits since at least 1650, but were then scattered by Iroquois incursions to points west (Green Bay, the Mississippi) and north (Chaquamegon Bay, Sault Ste. Marie), returning to St. Ignace by the 1670s. Some Ottawas followed Cadillac to Detroit in 1701, but many stayed in Michilimackinac and the islands of northern Lakes Michigan and Huron. As many as 1,500 Ottawas lived near Michilimackinac in 1720, and about 750 more lived farther south near Detroit and Saginaw Bay.³²

Ottawas at Mackinac sought better planting grounds after they overstressed their cornfields, and founded the village of L'Arbre Croche thirty miles down the Lake Michigan coast in 1742, which became a major corn supplier.³³ At St. Mary's River, small Ojibwa groups that the French called Saulteurs or Saulteaux had long maintained fishing villages. Primarily hunters and fishers from the country north of Lake Superior, Ojibwas moved into the Upper Great Lakes area after 1650 and moved south and east during the early eighteenth century, living alongside Ottawas at Saginaw, L'Arbre Croche, and Detroit by the 1740s.³⁴ By the end of the French occupation of the Straits,

³¹Lyle M. Stone, *Fort Michilimackinac, 1715-1781: An Archaeological Perspective on the Revolutionary Frontier* (East Lansing: The Museum, Michigan State University, 1974), 8.

³²Kinietz, *Indians of the Western Great Lakes*, 228-32; Johanna E. Feest and Christian Feest, "Ottawa," in Trigger, *Handbook*, 774.

³³*Ibid.*, 772-73.

³⁴E. S. Rogers, "Southeastern Ojibwa," in Trigger, *Handbook*, 760-62.

they also maintained a village of 100 men on Mackinac Island.³⁵ Potawatomis, Nipissings, and many other groups visited the narrow strait to trade and fish. Exact censuses of Indians near Michilimackinac during the French regime are difficult to assess, not only because of the lack of dependable records but also because most Indians resorting there did not make the Straits a permanent or even semi-permanent home. By the end of the French period of occupation, about 250 Ottawa and 400 Ojibwa men lived near Michilimackinac; adding in women and children probably would bring this total to more than two thousand overall. Of course, this figure does not take into account the many French traders and their Métis and Indian wives who visited and worked near the post. Working within the structure of this dynamic cultural mix challenged fort commandants during both French and British regimes at Michilimackinac.³⁶

Michilimackinac saw no fighting during the Seven Years' War, but local Indians supported French interests in many campaigns during the conflict. Mackinac Indians definitely accompanied Michilimackinac commandant Charles de Langlade and the French forces who defeated Edward Braddock's advance into the Pennsylvania frontier in 1754, and Ottawas of L'Arbre Croche, led by their hereditary chief La Fourche, aided Langlade and the Marquis de Montcalm in the 1757 reduction of Fort William Henry in

³⁵Descriptions of native populations often included only men, or "warriors" as they were usually called. In sedentary villages it is assumed that women and children were present, and those population estimates can be increased conservatively by a factor of four, bringing the population of Mackinac Island to at least 400 if the original report can be believed. Alexander Henry, *Travels and Adventures in Canada in the Years 1760-1776* (1809; repr., Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1921), 37-38.

³⁶"A List of the Indian Nations," *WJP*, 10:544-46. Negotiating the kinship-based networks that dominated the fur trade and neighboring villages was vital for French success during their tenure at the Straits. British regimes would have less success with these relationships at posts throughout the Great Lakes region. Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men*, 54-72.

New York.³⁷ Throughout the region, Indians maintained their loyalties to their French trading partners, though fighting in faraway battles might have broadened some Indians' outlooks enough to prepare them for the upcoming regime change. For example, a "chief" living fifteen miles south of the fort who had been taken prisoner by Sir William Johnson at the battle of Niagara had been treated so well that he flew the British colors (given to him as a present on his release) over his lodge, which did little to endear him to the largely pro-French Indians living nearby.³⁸

Despite the support of such local Anglophiles, the transition to a British regime at the Straits after French capitulation in 1761 was destined to be a rough one. William Johnson warned that Indians in the Great Lakes region might not welcome an expanded military presence. Indians had not necessarily minded the French garrisons and forts, but they viewed any augmentation of the fort system as a "great cause of Suspicion," and tolerated them only because they brought traders and their goods into Indian country.³⁹ To further complicate the situation, Sir Jeffrey Amherst, the British commander-in-chief in North America, planned to institute a policy that would replace the French system with one Indians were unlikely to find any better.

Great Britain spent itself into near-bankruptcy winning North America away from France in the Seven Years' War, and Amherst had no desire to continue the expensive French policy of buying Indian allegiances with gifts. Under the British regime, Indians would be treated like other British subjects in America and would pull their weight in the fur trade without additional inducements to friendship, a decision that would have

³⁷David A. Armour, "Who Remembers La Fourche?" *Chronicle: Historical Society of Michigan Newsletter* 16:2 (Summer 1980): 13.

³⁸Henry, *Travels and Adventures*, 57-58.

³⁹"Niagara and Detroit Proceedings, July-Sep. 1761," *WJP*, 3:502.

profound implications.⁴⁰ In addition to the wide scale diplomatic impact on Indian-British relations caused by this diminution of gift-giving, the new policy threatened individual Indians with serious economic consequences. Many Indians had come to expect presents and provisions as a condition of their alliances. They depended on these gifts of food, clothing, powder and ammunition for survival, especially when traders encouraged Indians to trade furs for rum instead of other necessities. Reducing Indian presents resulted in greater Indian poverty.

When Amherst sent a detachment under the command of Capt. Henry Balfour to take command of Michilimackinac and the other French posts in the upper lakes, Balfour wasted no time in announcing that the new regime would not coddle the local Indians or dole out gifts as lavishly as the French had done. At a Michilimackinac Indian conference in September 1761, in which a Saulteur speaker asked for powder, lead, and other goods for the winter hunting season to save his people from starvation, Balfour upbraided them for wasting their pelts by purchasing rum in Niagara. "I know well it is not by misfortune you have become miserable," Balfour scolded. "You sold your pellety for Rum, without even buying powder, Lead, or any other Things; you are continually drunk, and then you behave yourselves not as Men, but as Beasts." He gave them enough goods to hold them over, but exhorted the Saulteurs to "become Wiser for the time to come."⁴¹

As low as was Amherst's opinion of Indians, his view of unscrupulous traders might have been even lower. He charged them with luring Indians to the posts with messages of wampum (Amherst was very upset at such unauthorized communications) and then taking all their furs in exchange for rum, leaving the Indians "Naked and

⁴⁰White, *Middle Ground*, 256-268; Dowd, *War Under Heaven*, 73-75.

⁴¹"Henry Balfour's Conference with the Indians," *WJP*, 3:544.

Destitute of Everything.”⁴² But unscrupulous as the traders may have been, the Indians wanted them. Traders spoke the Indians’ languages, supplied their needs, and lived with them in winter. Amherst’s attempts to restrict traders’ activities could only be interpreted by Indians as an unfriendly policy. The message could not have been clearer to Michilimackinac’s Indians: The new regime would be less paternalistic than the French, and the trade in goods and provisions would be affected. At least one British trader had already found this out.

Alexander Henry was one of the first English licensees to trade at Michilimackinac, and his reception there was not warm. On his journey to the straits he had to disguise himself as a French *voyageur* because of frequent reports that Indians would kill any Englishman they found.⁴³ Upon his arrival and the discovery of his true identity, Minavavana, also known as “Le Grand Sauteur,” a leader of the Ojibwas living on Mackinac Island, warned Henry that hostilities would continue unless the new regime met their expectations. Because many of his people had been killed in service to the French, those who killed them must make amends, either with their own deaths, or by “covering the bodies of the dead, and thus allaying the resentment of their relations.” According to Minavavana, this could only be accomplished “by making presents.” Until the English king made such arrangements, the Ojibwas would consider them enemies.⁴⁴

Minavavana gave credit to Henry’s respect and bravery and allowed him to stay,

⁴² Amherst to Johnson, Nov. 21, 1762, *WJP*, 3:941-43.

⁴³ Henry, *Travels and Adventures*, 34-38.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 42-45.

on condition that Henry would allow him a taste of “English milk,” or rum.⁴⁵ Henry hesitated to supply rum to the Ojibwa band, but outnumbered and in hostile country, he had little choice but to comply. Soon after, two hundred Ottawas from L’Arbre Croche descended upon the fort and “asked” that all the men of their village be given fifty beaver skins’ worth of goods on credit until the next year.⁴⁶ Refusal would have meant death for Henry and his associates, and the only alternative was the loss of all of his trade goods destined for the western fur country. The arrival of Balfour’s 300 British troops saved Henry’s life and livelihood, but the local Ottawa and Ojibwa men had made their points and asserted their importance in the region. Most of Balfour’s men would soon move on to other posts on the Great Lakes, leaving Fort Michilimackinac to continue to rely in part upon the hundreds of native inhabitants and their control of food and warfare in the region.

Henry soon discovered that there was no living in the upper Great Lakes without adopting native foodways to at least some degree. Corn was the nutritional lifeline in the region, especially for canoe voyages, and that made the great corn post of L’Arbre Croche essential. Corn was boiled, mashed, and mixed with animal fat for consumption by *voyageurs*; on a voyage, “a bushel with two pounds of prepared fat” could nourish a man for a month of hard labor. This method was the only way to provision canoes for the long

⁴⁵Minavavana used this term to denote a gift of rum as a mark of friendship and understanding. Native requests for “milk” referred to the reciprocal sustenance provided by gifts of alcohol. The metaphor allowed Indians to transfer their metaphor of kinship to the trade relationship, with the natives as children receiving milk from their parents. This also allowed Indians to impose a familiarity from their own lives onto an important foreign product. In this way, Ojibwas bridged cultural gaps in trading and were able to come to reciprocal agreements with British newcomers. Without this reciprocity, friendly trade and personal trust were impossible. Bruce M. White, “Give Us a Little Milk,” 191-92.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 48-50.

voyages into the Canadian wilderness, because any other type of food would take up too much space. All of this food was prepared by women, whose skills made fur-trading voyages possible.⁴⁷ Both Indians and Canadians preferred whitefish and trout, which were easily caught in both winter and summer, but when fishing failed and no beef or pork could be had, inhabitants of Michilimackinac were forced to purchase corn at exorbitant prices; Henry paid forty livres worth of pelts per bushel for corn, and had he paid in cash the price would have doubled.⁴⁸

Luckily for Henry, whitefish were plentiful at Sault Sainte Marie, ninety miles away by canoe, which he visited in 1762. A fire at the Sault post in December left Henry, the commander/clerk Lt. John Jamet, and translator Jean Baptiste Cadotte and his Ojibwa wife living in a small shack, “subsisting only by hunting and fishing” which kept them alive for two freezing winter months.⁴⁹ After returning to Michilimackinac briefly in February 1763, Henry went back to the Sault and learned the Ojibwa method of tapping maple trees and making sugar, which was their main sustenance through April. “I have known Indians to live wholly upon the same and become fat,” observed Henry, who

⁴⁷Ibid., 54. Production of this corn porridge, known as sagamité, was done by Indian and Métis women, and was only one of many womens’ tasks in the fur trade. Among their many important jobs, women processed hides, made shoes, clothing, and canoes, and grew and processed all kinds of food, including pemmican, maple sugar, and dried berries. If corn was a lifeline in northern fur trade societies, then Indian and Métis women were the anchors. Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 53-73.

⁴⁸Ibid., 54-62.

⁴⁹Ibid., 65. Cadotte became Henry’s trading partner, and his family was among the most important in the Great Lakes fur trade. Theresa Schenk, “The Cadottes: Five Generations of Fur Traders on Lake Superior,” in Brown, Eccles, and Heldman, *The Fur Trade Revisited*, 189-98.

seems to have spent his entire first two years at Michilimackinac living on locally produced food.⁵⁰

Henry's most famous contribution to the literature of Michilimackinac is his eyewitness account of the "massacre" and reduction of the fort by local Ojibwas on June 2, 1763, which was inspired in part by messages encouraging a pan-Indian uprising throughout the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley. Using the pretence of a ball game outside the fort, Ojibwa men launched the ball toward the post's gate and raced after it and, retrieving weapons from Ojibwa women pretending to watch the game, ran into the fort and quickly killed sixteen soldiers, taking the rest of the English occupants prisoner.⁵¹ Most of the garrison and traders were later rescued and taken to Montreal by L'Arbre Croche Ottawas, who were angry at the Ojibwa for attacking the fort without seeking their permission (or perhaps, without requesting their participation). A captive of the Ojibwa victors, Henry was first taken on a boat bound for Beaver Island, where he might have ended up part of the Ojibwa food chain himself had not the Ottawas rescued him.⁵² But they soon returned Henry into Ojibwa hands, where the trader and his fellow prisoners were offered bread cut with a knife still covered with the blood of British soldiers as their only sustenance, and were told to "eat the blood of their countrymen."⁵³

⁵⁰Ibid., 69-70.

⁵¹Dowd, *War Under Heaven*, 126; Henry, *Travels and Adventures*, 78-85. The Ojibwas' attack on Michilimackinac was not prompted only by their pro-French political leanings. Bruce M. White has argued that the attack was an example of a trade "pillaging," which resulted from the Britons' lack of establishing proper trade and friendship protocols, especially through gift-giving. Threats of pillaging (imagined or real) were an important tactic used by Indians in enforcing reciprocity in the Great Lakes trade. "The Fear of Pillaging: Folktales of the Great Lakes Fur Trade," in Brown, Eccles, and Heldman, *The Fur Trade Revisited*, 199-213.

⁵²Ibid., 97-98.

⁵³Ibid., 99.

This vivid episode showed gruesomely what should have been evident to all: Indians influenced the backwoods through control of foodways and, if necessary, violence. Local Indians occupied Fort Michilimackinac until British troops arrived the following year. In the meantime, British authorities worked to rebuild Indian-British relations throughout the Great Lakes region, which had deteriorated during the destructive war named for the Ottawa leader and besieger of Detroit, Pontiac.

Sir William Johnson knew that the trade must be continued, but he had his doubts about posts situated deep in Indian country like Michilimackinac. In January 1764, Lt. Col. William Eyre of the King's Engineers encouraged Johnson not to reoccupy the outposts because there was no way to make such posts defensible against Indians.⁵⁴ This was the basic problem for Johnson and the new commander-in-chief, Gen. Thomas Gage, who needed to continue the trade and resume amicable Indian relations. Johnson recommended that trade be confined to the large forts at Detroit, Niagara, and Oswego, because even enhanced garrisons could not protect smaller posts, except by the "French Maxim" of buying the Indians' protection with presents. Limiting trade to a few posts would likely enrage traders, who eschewed caution and would "run any Risque" in pursuing their occupation, but to Johnson it seemed worth the trouble.⁵⁵

Meanwhile, Gage had already begun the retaking of the straits by ordering Col. John Bradstreet to send a detachment of one hundred men to Michilimackinac with provisions for fifteen-to-eighteen months. With local Indians still resistant to British occupation of Michilimackinac, hopes of procuring food locally would be slim. Gage also instructed Bradstreet to be wary of Indian remonstrances, especially from L'Arbre

⁵⁴William Eyre to Johnson, Jan. 7, 1764, *WJP*, 11:20-23.

⁵⁵Johnson to Cadwallader Colden, June 9, 1764, *WJP*, 4:442-44.

Croche and their leader La Fourche, who were likely to demand recompense because of their service in rescuing the Michilimackinac garrison. From “their Cunning Old Speaker, who is a very great Rascal,” warned Gage, “You will hear of nothing but Poverty and Distress & the Great Services they did Us: they are however the Richest tribe in that whole Country.”⁵⁶ But such protestations were a commonly used attempt to manage British-Indian relations on Indians’ terms. Often the claims of poverty and nakedness were based on reality. The Indian uprising restricted trade throughout the Great Lakes region and stressed the native inhabitants economically. But claims of hardship and pleas for pity were also a tactic for obtaining provisions and goods, and were used alongside threats of violence and promises of aid to pressure British authorities into rewarding Indians as the French had done earlier.⁵⁷ These seemingly conflicting tactics merged comfortably in the Indians’ ways of thinking. In July 1764, for example, hungry Michilimackinac Ojibwas shot a French *habitant* for “defending his Hogg,” and then appeared at the fort and demanded an end to war.⁵⁸ Mackinac Indians wished for a resumption of trade and an end to violence, but they would address hunger and other necessities at the same time.

Throughout 1764, Bradstreet and his successor as commandant of Detroit, John Campbell, made arrangements to send the requested detachment to Michilimackinac. The attempt was fraught with problems, mostly dealing with provisions. Captain William

⁵⁶Gage to Bradstreet, Apr. 2, 1764, Gage Papers AS, vol. 16.

⁵⁷For the complex metaphorical meanings of Indian pleas for pity, see Bruce M. White, “Give Us a Little Milk,” 187-88. At the 1764 summer conference at Niagara held to negotiate an end to the Indian uprising, Johnson heard many such protestations of hardship, usually from friendly Indians who had no part in the hostilities and had come to the congress to trade or receive British gifts. For examples see *WJP*, 4:466-83, 11:262-76. See Chapter 4, 214-22, for more information on the Niagara conference of 1764.

⁵⁸Gage to Johnson, July 7, 1764, *WJP*, 4:481-84.

Howard and his two companies reached Michilimackinac on September 22, 1764, late in the year for any local provisioning even if food was available. Campbell had his doubts about the enterprise, reporting to Gage that if the schooner carrying supplies did not arrive by October 20, Howard and his men may have to return to Detroit “for want of Provision.”⁵⁹ No supplies arrived, and Howard meant to depart when the local priest and inhabitants offered to lend him all the corn they had if he would consent to stay through the winter. With the provisions they had brought with them, Howard reckoned that his men could stay until spring. He wrote to Bradstreet, “I found that I could support 60 Men till the 15 of May every body Included, at 8 Ounces of Pork, half a Pound of Bread and a Pint of Corn (per) Day.” However, if no supplies arrived by May 20 he would have to leave, and the inhabitants would starve if he could not replace the borrowed corn. He had already sent some men back to Detroit after he discovered that some of his barrels of flour and pork had not been completely filled.⁶⁰

Food worries only continued for Howard at the Straits. All of their flour went bad, and in May he reported that his garrison had been living on rotten pork; luckily, because of the availability of fish “very little Pork serves them.”⁶¹ When provisions did arrive by schooner, Howard found that all of the food had spoiled, especially the barrels of pork, and were deemed “unfit to be issued to the Troops.” Campbell sent an emergency relief convoy of an officer and twenty-five *voyageurs* in canoes to relieve the post (a dangerous gambit in late October), because Howard claimed the garrison would run out of

⁵⁹Campbell to Gage, Oct. 3, 1764, Gage Papers AS, vol. 25.

⁶⁰Campbell to Bradstreet, Dec. 7, 1764, Gage Papers AS, vol. 29.

⁶¹Howard to Bradstreet, Jan. 6, 1765, Gage Papers AS, vol. 29; Campbell to Gage, May 31, 1765, Gage Papers AS, vol. 37.

provisions by mid-January otherwise.⁶² By November 1765, Howard had reached his physical limits. Disease, bad food and other “bodily infirmities contracted in the Service” caused him to request retirement after thirty-two years of service. But the aging officer stayed on at Michilimackinac until relieved in August 1766 by Robert Rogers.⁶³ With local food supplies strained after the Indian uprising, and the necessity of keeping a large garrison to protect the fur trade, Britain would have a hard time maintaining their post at the Straits.

The British Michilimackinac of 1766 was quite a different operation compared with the earlier French endeavor. While the French seldom maintained a garrison of more than twenty soldiers, the British garrison was at least five times larger. Explorer Jonathan Carver described the fort in 1766 as having a “strong stockade” and about thirty houses for its garrison of one hundred men and resident traders.⁶⁴ Evidence of native material culture has been found in the fort, though the greater abundance of this has been isolated to the French period and the early British occupation. Indian slaves or servants may have worked in the fort, or soldiers and traders may have used native manufactures.⁶⁵ The British post was more military in character than its French predecessor, and while the fur

⁶²Campbell to Gage, Oct. 31, 1765, Gage Papers AS, vol. 45.

⁶³Campbell to Gage, Nov. 1, 1765, Gage Papers AS, vol. 45.

⁶⁴Jonathan Carver, *Travels Through the Interior Parts of North America, in the Years 1766, 1767, and 1768* (1781; repr., Minneapolis: Ross and Haines, 1956), 18.

⁶⁵John Martin Francis Whitaker, *The Functions of Four Colonial Yards of the Southeast Row House, Fort Michilimackinac, Michigan*, Archaeological Completion Report Series, no. 16 (Mackinac Island, MI: Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1998), 117-19.

trade was still the primary reason for maintaining the post, the army and the Indian Department oversaw all operations.⁶⁶

Archaeology reveals another difference between the French and British occupations. Animal remains in sample refuse pits from both the French and British occupations of the fort show that the French used locally available sources of food much more than did the British, who tried to rely more on outside provisioning. Canoe travel defined the French supply system, and their posts were isolated and largely self-sufficient, based on foraging, hunting, fishing, and corn purchased from L'Arbre Croche and other Indian corn posts. With sloops and schooners at their disposal, the British were able to transport provisions for many months, including cows and swine. The highly differentiated military social order under the British regime is displayed in the faunal remains as well, with officers, enlisted men, and traders eating different kinds and qualities of meat. In at least one of the soldiers' houses the diet seems to have been very close to that of the earlier French period, with local game, fish, fowl, and Indian corn

⁶⁶Archaeologists have confirmed the differences in vocational use of Fort Michilimackinac and its adjacent village. However, despite the increased emphasis on military activity by the British, trading still dominated as the post's primary economic endeavor. Donald P. Heldman and Roger T. Grange, *Excavations at Fort Michilimackinac, 1978-1979: The Rue de la Babillarde*, Archaeological Completion Report Series, no. 3 (Mackinac Island, MI: Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1981), 202.

supplying much of the nutrition.⁶⁷

Even though the British may have depended more on provisioning from outside sources, Howard's experiences show that the supply chain was hazardous and prone to failure. Supplies could be packed poorly at shipping or contaminated enroute.

Unscrupulous traders could skim food from the crates and barrels at many points, and shipments often arrived deficient. Outside supplying worked better for posts farther down the Great Lakes such as Detroit and Niagara, though local French and British farming also provided much-needed food at those locations. At Michilimackinac the local farmers were Ottawa women, and despite the best efforts of British quartermasters, Indians and Indian corn were very important to British occupiers of the post.

If the British occupiers of the Mackinac Straits were beginning to show their dependence on Indian maize, the Indians still desired English rum and manufactured goods and depended on the traders who supplied it. This worried Gage, who thought the

⁶⁷Charles E. Cleland, "Comparison of the Faunal Remains from French and British Refuse Pits at Fort Michilimackinac: A Study in Changing Subsistence Patterns," *Canadian Historic Sites: Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History* 3 (1970): 7-23. Elizabeth Scott's study of subsistence patterns under the French regime show much differentiation based on profession (clergy and traders) and socioeconomic class. She also bases her arguments on analysis of refuse pits and patterns of dispersal. *French Subsistence at Fort Michilimackinac, 1715-1781: The Clergy and the Traders*, Archaeological Completion Report Series, no. 9 (Mackinac Island, MI: Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1985). Lyle M. Stone makes the same argument for greater differentiation in material culture under the British regime compared with the French occupation of Fort Michilimackinac, but bases his argument on artifact analysis rather than zooarchaeology. *Fort Michilimackinac*, 348-56. For a concise description of the outside provisioning system at the fort, see Brian Leigh Dunnigan, *The Necessity of Regularity in Quartering Soldiers: The Organization, Material Culture and Quartering of the British Soldier at Michilimackinac* (Mackinac Island, MI: Mackinac State Historic Parks, 1999), 17-21. For evidence of soldiers eating more wild and local food than officers or wealthier townspeople, see Lynn M. Evans, *House D of the Southeast Row House: Excavations at Fort Michilimackinac, 1989-1997*, Archaeological Completion Report Series, no. 17 (Mackinac Island, MI: Mackinac State Historic Parks, 2001), 60-73.

“Canada-Traders,” to be “A terrible Set of People,” who would “stick to Nothing true or false.”⁶⁸ Meanwhile, hundreds and perhaps thousands of Indians had visited Michilimackinac in 1765, seeking trade and encouraging the resumption of licensed traders wintering with the Indians in their hunting grounds.⁶⁹ Johnson apologized to Michilimackinac traders for the delay in resuming the trade, but he worried that storing goods at the fort would prove too tempting to the Indians who controlled the region, and renewed licensing of French traders to winter with Indians would give them too much influence and control in the Canadian wild.⁷⁰ French traders had much to gain by wintering with the Indians. They were more accustomed to it than British traders, who would often sell their goods to the French rather than risk wintering with unknown Indians. French traders could then turn around and resell those goods at higher prices. Gage rejected traders’ claims that the Indians would starve if the traders did not go among them, and thought that simply restricting trade to the larger posts would be preferable to licensing French traders or sending English traders into an environment where they would be at a clear disadvantage.⁷¹

Gage finally ordered that, under a plan formulated in 1764, only the large trading posts of Michilimackinac, Detroit, Niagara, Erie, Oswego, and Stanwix would remain open. A commissary from the Indian Department would regulate each post, and all Indians who wished to trade must travel to the posts themselves. Gage thought this would

⁶⁸Gage to Johnson, Nov. 24, 1765, *WJP*, 4:878-79.

⁶⁹Daniel Claus to Johnson, July 11, 1765, *WJP*, 4:789-91; John Porteous, *Schenectady to Michilimackinac, 1765 and 1766: Journal of John Porteous* (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1939), 91.

⁷⁰Johnson to the Traders at Michilimackinac, July 1, 1765, *WJP*, 4:810; Johnson to Gage, Aug. 28, 1765, *WJP*, 4:833-34.

⁷¹Gage to Johnson, *WJP*, 11:915-17.

satisfy the Indians, who were used to traveling long distances in their hunts, and it would allow British authorities to maintain a close watch on the frontiers. But Gage's plan would only put more pressure on the delicate food chain in the Great Lakes, because Indians would have to provision themselves even more for the longer journeys to the posts, and then consume more food while waiting for trade goods to arrive. Still, Gage was sure that resumption of the trade would placate the Indians, and draw them closer to British interests.⁷²

Gage was less sure of the man who was to replace William Howard as commandant of Michilimackinac, Major Robert Rogers. A hero of the Seven Years' War, Rogers had purchased his Michilimackinac appointment while in England. Gage worried that the young officer would be interested only in enriching himself and his friends at Michilimackinac, which the general called "the greatest Mart of Trade" in the Great Lakes.⁷³ Gage's biggest fear was the rum trade. He ordered commandants of all the posts not to allow liquor to be sold at the forts themselves, but instead to secure the rum in storage and have the traders deliver it to their Indian buyers at least two leagues from the forts.⁷⁴ As far as Michilimackinac was concerned, Gage and Johnson agreed that the

⁷²Gage to Johnson, *WJP*, 5:30-31. Gage's plan was never enforced effectively at Michilimackinac, where both French and British traders continued to trade in Indian villages throughout the 1760s, despite the presence of an Indian Department commissary. Gage and Johnson did not count on the kinship-based structure of the fur trade, and the inability of British post commandants and commissaries to restrict French traders and their native wives from trading in Indians' winter villages. The plan was a failure for Johnson and Gage, and officially ended in 1768. Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men*, 62-63.

⁷³Gage to Johnson, Mar. 23, 1766, *WJP*, 5:94; Johnson to Gage, Jan. 25, 1766, *WJP*, 12:8-10.

⁷⁴Gage to Post Commanders, Jan. 16, 1766, Gage Papers Supplementary Account, Box 47, transcription in Peterson Center Library, Mackinac State Historic Parks, Mackinaw City, Mich.

Indian Department commissary, Benjamin Roberts, would have ultimate authority over the trade there and should be able to keep Rogers under control.

That hope would be short-lived. Almost as soon as he arrived, Roberts was shocked at the amount of rum sold at the post. He worried that the hundreds of idle Indians waiting for trade goods to arrive might trade all their furs for rum, and the ensuing drunkenness would fuel native frustrations with the new trade system and lead to depredations against traders and settlers.⁷⁵ Subsequent letters to Johnson and other Indian agents reveal Roberts's fears that rum was being sold out of his sight and against Gage's orders. He found the proof he needed when he discovered a cache of "40 Kags" of rum stored on an island in Lake Michigan. Roberts seized the rum, whereupon Rogers demanded it back. Roberts accused Rogers of treason, and over the ensuing months engaged in a struggle for control of Michilimackinac that eventually saw Rogers carried in irons to Niagara to await trial for disobedience and insubordination.⁷⁶

Personalities of the individuals involved in this drama certainly played a role in the Rogers-Roberts dispute. But at the center lay the question of the rum trade, which would continue to constitute a controversial question in Indian-British relations because furs spent on alcohol could not be traded for guns, ammunition, manufactured goods, and provisions. In a region increasingly defined by British military concerns, where Indians sometimes found it necessary to travel hundreds of miles to conduct trade and treat with British trade authorities, the availability of critical goods was more important than ever.

⁷⁵Roberts to Daniel Claus, July 23, 1767 *WJP*, 12:342.

⁷⁶For a thorough treatment of the Roberts-Rogers conflict, see Peter Marshall, "The Michilimackinac Misfortunes of Commissary Roberts," in Brown, Eccles, and Heldman, *The Fur Trade Revisited*, 285-98.

Talk of rum haunted the communications from Michilimackinac in the years before the American Revolution, which was not surprising given the great amount of liquor sold on the lakes. A report of trade covering April to November 1768 shows that 68,312 gallons of rum passed down the St. Lawrence for the Indian trade at the Great Lakes posts.⁷⁷ Roberts complained to Johnson that there was little he could do to control it. "The Indians will Visit me, beg so hard in your name for rum, & wheedle so much they have already 10 Eight Gallen Kegs of me," he wrote to Johnson. Indians knew that they could buy all the rum that Roberts would allow to be sold, and could still ask for presents of liquor in Johnson's name to acquire even more. This increased costs to the crown, and sapped the profitability of the Mackinac mart. "I am at a loss what way of life to try," sulked Roberts, near the end of his tenure as commissary, and frustrated at his inability to advance British interests at the Straits.⁷⁸ Even local Indian leaders were unsuccessful in their attempts to control liquor usage and its attendant social problems. Johnson knew the power liquor held as a trade good and a new fixture of Indian life, and had little confidence in native efforts to control the sale of rum. "The Temptation is too great for them," Johnson despaired to Gage, "And altho' at a public Congress the Chiefs, Sensible of it fatal Effects make heavy Complaints against it, I believe very few of them have virtue enough to resist what they Condemn."⁷⁹

Luckily for Michilimackinac, the Ottawas at L'Arbre Croche and their most powerful chief, La Fourche, were proving to be good friends to the British operation as long as the presents kept coming. "As long as you remain here you and your Garrison

⁷⁷"Report of Indian Trade," Nov. 16, 1768, *WJP*, 12:650.

⁷⁸Roberts to Johnson, Aug. 29, 1769, *WJP*, 7:146-47.

⁷⁹Johnson to Gage, Dec. 31, 1770, *WJP*, 7:1053-54.

Shall always Sleep in Safety,” La Fourche promised the post’s new commandant, Beamsley Glasier. La Fourche made it clear, though, that as the English king’s “Obedient Children,” when the Ottawas visited “Out of pure Affection to See our father,” they “must not go away dry.” For the cost of annual presents of rum, food, tobacco, and ammunition, the allegiance of the important L’Arbre Croche band was a good bargain for the British command.⁸⁰

Glasier liked and respected La Fourche and the other Ottawas, and recounted to Johnson that despite the ample presence of liquor during their visit to Michilimackinac in August 1768, “there was not one of them drunk.”⁸¹ Traveler Peter Pond agreed in 1773, calling the L’Arbre Croche Ottawas “the most Sivilised in these Parts,” except when they “Drink to Exses.”⁸² As troubling as the rum trade was for British interests in the Great Lakes country, liquor had come to be expected by Indians either as a consumer good or as a gift, and the best that the Michilimackinac commanders could hope for was that it be used responsibly if near the fort, or consumed far enough away that it would not matter.

The American Revolution further stressed the supply lines on the Great Lakes, though little actual fighting took place in the region. As the “greatest mart of trade” in the lakes Michilimackinac seemed an obvious target, but its remoteness proved to be its salvation. American rebels, most auspiciously those led by George Rogers Clark, moved into more accessible backcountry regions further south in the Illinois country where thousands of anti-British Indians and French *habitants* could be found. During the early

⁸⁰“Speech of La Force and Other Ottawas,” Aug. 30, 1768, *WJP*, 6:348-49.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, 349.

⁸²“Journal of Peter Pond,” in Wisconsin State Historical Society, *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin* (Madison, WI: The Society, 1854-1931), 18:314-54 at 328-29 (hereafter cited as *WHC*).

years of the Revolution, Michilimackinac's role was to organize and supply Indian forces from the immediate vicinity of the Straits and points north and west for major engagements in the eastern theaters. For example, Michilimackinac Ojibwas, Ottawas, and Menominees from across Lake Michigan followed Charles de Langlade, now a translator in the British Indian Department, in joining General John Burgoyne's failed 1777 offensive in New York. Outfitting and provisioning such large expeditions put increased pressure on the Mackinac food system.

Throughout the war, Michilimackinac's main military role would be as a staging area for engagements elsewhere. Aside from that ancillary wartime role, the post commandant's job was to maintain Indian allegiances and to protect the fur trade, which managed to hum along solidly if not spectacularly during the war years. Arent Schuyler de Peyster, commandant of the post after July 1774, spent much of his tenure arranging Indian assaults into the Illinois and Wabash regions and fortifying the crumbling ramparts of the fort against the seemingly inevitable rebel assault from the south that would never come. Rising war costs, which included increases in allowances for Indian gifts, stagnation of fur trade revenues, and disruption of supply lines all contributed to tense and troubling times at Michilimackinac.⁸³

De Peyster tried his best to provision the garrison and the hundreds of Indians moving through the fort headed for distant battles, while still maintaining the trade. Rum

⁸³The most exhaustive treatment of the American Revolution at Michilimackinac is David A. Armour and Keith R. Widder, *At the Crossroads: Michilimackinac During the American Revolution* (Mackinac Island, MI: Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1978). For a brief treatment, see Keith R. Widder, "Effects of the American Revolution on Fur-Trade Society at Michilimackinac," in Brown, Eccles, and Heldman, *Fur Trade Revisited*, 299-316. For the effects of the Revolution on Great Lakes Indian social interactions with whites and each other, see White, *Middle Ground*, 366-412.

availability was a problem, forcing De Peyster to purchase liquor for Indian gifts from traders, as well as dipping into his "private stock."⁸⁴ Outside provisioning, though greatly increased during the war, proved insufficient to feed the increased number of men moving through the fort, and much of the food arrived spoiled; provisions of poorer quality were given to Indians. More troubling were reports that local meat supplies were becoming strained, either through pressures brought by the war or simply through population changes or environmental stress. "There are not five carcasses of any kind brought to this Post in the course of a year," De Peyster complained, "There are fewer animals, and Indians since the beginning of the War are become very idle, even in the hunting Season. I am obliged to help maintain all who live within fifty or sixty miles of this place, were it not for the sugar in the spring many would starve."⁸⁵ This meant trouble for De Peyster, because new British commander-in-chief Frederick Haldimand had been encouraging him to reduce supply costs by moving toward local provisioning sources, especially dried deer meat and fish, using "all such means as the Indians use."⁸⁶

De Peyster had other concerns by 1779, with George Rogers Clark topping the list. Clark had successfully defeated Detroit governor William Hamilton at Vincennes in February 1779 and won temporary control of the Illinois country, and De Peyster was certain that Clark's Kentuckians would soon make their way up the lakes. Of course, De Peyster had confidence in his Indian diplomatic efforts and the loyalty of the Lake Michigan groups. "I don't care how soon Mr. Clarke appears provided he come by Lake

⁸⁴De Peyster to Carleton, May 30, 1778, *MPHC*, 9:365-66.

⁸⁵De Peyster to Haldimand, June 14, 1779, *MPHC*, 9:385.

⁸⁶Haldimand to De Peyster, Dec. 25, 1778, *MPHC*, 9:355-56.

Michigan & the Indians prove staunch,” he bragged to Haldimand.⁸⁷ Preparedness was one of De Peyster’s virtues, and he made sure to reinforce the fort. This would not help against Clark’s rebels, who would probably bring artillery and blow the log stockade to pieces, but it might help stave off Indian attacks, which De Peyster believed were more likely than a Kentuckian assault.⁸⁸ In fact, a strong fort was not enough. De Peyster wanted an armed sloop, which he thought would “awe” the Indians more than the fort’s guns.⁸⁹ De Peyster found himself in a difficult and doubly ironic position: His commanding officer wanted him to use more Indian-supplied provisions at a time when local food was running out, and he depended on Lake Michigan Indians as his main source of protection at a time when Indians were his most likely enemies. De Peyster reminded Haldimand that British strength at the straits was invested in “the good understanding kept up with the Indians,” who could change allegiances with little or no notice.⁹⁰ Local Indians were DePeyster’s biggest fear and his best source of protection.

The situation did not change under De Peyster’s successor, Patrick Sinclair, who took command in October 1779. Almost immediately he notified Haldimand that the fort’s situation was untenable. For one thing, the arable soil and lake conditions around the fort would not serve Haldimand’s “scheme” of using local provisions produced either through agriculture or fishing. Decades of increased corn production had stressed the area’s soil, and fishing on the lakes in fall and winter was so dangerous that three soldiers had almost drowned the previous year (one later died) because of high lake winds. Sinclair recommended that the fort be moved to Mackinac Island, where the soil was

⁸⁷De Peyster to Haldimand, May 13, 1779, *MPHC*, 9:381.

⁸⁸De Peyster to Brehm, June 20, 1779, *MPHC*, 9:386-87.

⁸⁹De Peyster to Carleton, May 30, 1778, *MPHC*, 9:366.

⁹⁰De Peyster to Haldimand, Oct. 7, 1778, *MPHC*, 9:373.

much better for agriculture and a small sheltered bay would provide safer fishing and lake travel. On the island farmers and fishermen could supply the garrison and greatly reduce the crown's expenses. Also, the fort could be built upon elevated ground, overseeing the harbor and land for miles around.⁹¹ The post would be much better protected on the island against any rebel attack by way of Lake Michigan, unlike the "defenceless" old fort where the garrison depended on the availability of fish, Indian-supplied corn, and the scant protection of log pickets. Maintaining De Peyster's Indian fears, Sinclair may have been even more afraid of the local native population than he was of Clark's small army far away in the Illinois country, and he was sure that "the Influence it would retain & command with the Indians of this Extended country" would justify construction of a strong new fort on the small island in the Straits.⁹²

As concerned as Sinclair may have been about George Rogers Clark and local Indians, he was just as worried about provisioning the post sufficient to keep it on a war footing. In October 1779, Sinclair ordered Samuel Robertson to take the armed sloop *Felicity* on a loop around Lake Michigan to gather intelligence and look for corn. Sailing the lakes in late autumn was always risky, but corn was the fort's lifeline. With winter approaching, Sinclair felt he must have control of all the provisions he and his men could muster. The mission was both diplomatic and practical. Sinclair told Haldimand's aide de camp Dederick Brehm that he found the "Dispositions of the Indians in Lake Michigan very wavering" to the British cause, but also that "several Depots of Corn in the rivers there" might be captured by the sloop. Two Canadian guides and interpreter Charles Gautier accompanied Robertson with gifts for the Lake Michigan Indians, exhorting them

⁹¹Sinclair to Brehm, Oct. 7, 1779, *MPHC*, 9:524-25.

⁹²*Ibid.*, 528.

to “good behaviour during the winter” and recruiting men for a planned attack on St. Louis, to be led by local chiefs Minable and Matchekewis. But as for the corn, Robertson was to take no chances; he was ordered to purchase “all the grain Grease & Provisions in that Country on the credit of the Merchants and Traders here & to use that of the Government if necessary.” If any “refractory disaffected persons” were found, Robertson was to seize as much of their corn as the *Felicity* could hold, give them a receipt, and “destroy the rest” of the food to keep it out of enemy hands.”⁹³

Robertson and his crew reached the Muskegon River by October 31. There, “a negro & 3 indeans,” one of them a chief of the L’Arbre Croche Ottawas, informed them that as much as 200 bags of corn had been cached away on the Grand River. But despite Robertson’s best efforts, the approach of winter frustrated his subsequent attempts to find them.⁹⁴ On November 3, the *Felicity* weighed anchor in Milwaukee Bay, but negotiations with Indians and two French traders there produced no corn. The crop at Milwaukee had been poor, and since no traders had been allowed in the area, the Indians saved their corn for trading the following spring.⁹⁵ Throughout the trip, Robertson was also frustrated in seeking intelligence about Rebel movements on the lakes. All of the Indians he met received Sinclair’s warnings to “behave” agreeably, but without capturing any

⁹³Sinclair to Brehm, Oct. 29, 1779, *MPHC*, 9:530. Large supplies of corn in the Indian villages of southern Lake Michigan were not unusual. Native women maintained large agricultural operations in the area and produced substantial surpluses of corn and other crops for sale in the fur trade. For an example of southern Michigan natives’ agricultural potential, see Susan Sleeper-Smith’s study of Potawatomi women who traded food at Fort St. Joseph in *Indian Women and French Men*, 73-85.

⁹⁴“A Voyage on Lake Michigan, 1779,” *WHC*, 11:207-08.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 210-12.

intelligence or provisions, the *Felicity's* trip around the lake would do little to help Michilimackinac through the winter.⁹⁶

Sinclair received Haldimand's permission to negotiate with the Ojibwas living on Mackinac Island for its purchase, and this activity occupied most of 1780. In February, Sinclair hired local Indians to begin cutting planks for the new post, and by the middle of the month they had produced 16,000 feet of lumber.⁹⁷ Haldimand, a botany enthusiast, seemed delighted with Sinclair's reports of good farmland on the island, and offered to send various kinds of seeds with which to carry out his "favorite scheme" of agricultural experimentation.⁹⁸ By July, Sinclair had gained the Ojibwas' surrender of the island "without any Present," and the Indians had begun moving to the mainland. "I have explained His Excellency's intentions to them, to make Corn Fields of the whole Island — no more of their Country is required for that purpose," reported Sinclair, revealing one of his inducements for gaining the Indians' favor. He added, "The Fort will be on the upper ground where no Indians will be allowed to enter."⁹⁹ Mackinac Island was to be a segregated settlement, with rigid divisions between the military regime in the fort and the economic activities in the traders' town below. Sinclair finalized the official deed delivering Mackinac Island to Great Britain on May 12, 1781. Four Ojibwa chiefs received five thousand pounds New York currency and gave up all future claims to the island.¹⁰⁰ Despite the hardship that the move to Mackinac Island imposed on traders, who were forced to transport their houses to the island at their own expense, Sinclair's move

⁹⁶Ibid., 203-12.

⁹⁷Sinclair to Brehm, Feb. 15, 1780, *MPHC*, 9:538.

⁹⁸Brehm to Sinclair, Apr. 17, 1780, *MPHC*, 9:537.

⁹⁹Sinclair to Brehm, July 8, 1780, *MPHC*, 9:579.

¹⁰⁰"Indian Deed for the Island of Mackinac," *MPHC*, 19:633-34.

was a bold step toward British self-sufficiency at a point in time when the availability of local provisions seemed to be diminishing.¹⁰¹

Sinclair had ambitious plans for producing food in the short term, and even to offer provisions to other posts later on. "I have a Sergeant and six men employed in fishing & perhaps I may be able over & above Indian consumption, to send some thousand weight of fine trout to Niagara for the use of our brown allies there," he promised Brehm. Sinclair also hired three professional Canadian fishermen to supply all the Indian provisions needed at the Straits.¹⁰² But Sinclair's food woes continued. Captain John Mompesson, the new garrison commander, reported in September that corn supplies were becoming harder to find because Lake Michigan Indians were too hostile to trade with, though he hoped to buy some at L'Arbre Croche and Saginaw.¹⁰³

In July Sinclair noted the arrival of Indians in "greater numbers than usual" looking for provisions. He optimistically reported satisfying them with "the supply of Indian Corn which the last favourable season furnished us with." But a few weeks later, he complained that "the Indians are more expensive when inactive," staying closer to the fort and consuming more and more food.¹⁰⁴ By September 1781, Sinclair's reports

¹⁰¹Other operations aimed at British self-sufficiency had also been tried during the Revolutionary War. By 1774, trader John Askin operated small farms in L'Arbre Croche and at French Farm Lake, about 3 miles southeast of the fort. Askin continued to produce vegetables there for the garrison, traders, and merchants of the post until 1780, when he moved to Detroit and the post moved to Mackinac Island. The farms undoubtedly supplied much necessary food for the post, and were an important part of the local food chain. Donald P. Heldman, *Archaeological Investigations at French Farm Lake in Northern Michigan, 1981-1982*, Archaeological Completion Report Series no. 6 (Mackinac Island, MI: Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1983), 7-15, 69.

¹⁰²Sinclair to Brehm, Feb. 15, 1780, *MPHC*, 9:540-41.

¹⁰³Mompesson to De Peyster, Sep. 20, 1780, *MPHC*, 19:575.

¹⁰⁴Sinclair to [unknown], July 8, 1781, *MPHC*, 10:495; Sinclair to [unknown], July 31, 1781, *MPHC*, 10:504.

showed increasing levels of frustration, especially after Haldimand began complaining about the enormous expenses of building the new fort, provisioning the men involved, and supplying Indians with presents. The idleness of Indians waiting at the post to be sent out against the Rebels or waiting to trade for goods, food, and rum was the reason. "The Indians cannot be deprived of their usual quantity of Rum, however destructive it is, without creating much discontent, nor can they be detained at the Post to await the arrival of Presents without dissatisfaction, and a waste of Provisions greater in value than the presents they Receive," Sinclair argued. The situation only became worse after hostilities ended in 1781 and Haldimand ordered Sinclair and other post commanders to reduce the number of Indian gifts and discourage native visitors. Sinclair was troubled that "Five Hundred families naked & without provisions after coming a great distance" could not enter a post in which they had been welcomed as allies during the war. He argued that to "deprive them of Provisions or Presents necessary for their subsistence would be the same thing as to destroy them."¹⁰⁵ Sinclair was almost surely exaggerating, but he was faced with maintaining Indian friendship and reciprocal relations. As hard as it had been to encourage Indians to fight during the Revolution, Sinclair warned, it might be just as difficult to keep them quiet during peacetime. Haldimand was not convinced, and was determined to forbid excessive Indian presents and to prevent western Indians from resorting to the post. By September 1782 Sinclair had been relieved of his command, following accusations of excessive spending on presents and maintaining an improper and inefficient method of provisioning Indians.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Sinclair to Haldimand, July 5, 1782, *MPHC*, 10:596-97.

¹⁰⁶ Armour and Widder, *At the Crossroads*, 180.

After the war the business of the fort turned again to furs and food, and locally obtained corn increasingly proved to be a Michilimackinac staple. Monthly returns over the following year showed the amount of corn issued out of the king's stores to support Canadian employees, Indians, and the post's cattle: 180 bushels in September; 192 in October, 191 in November, 201 in December, 247 in January 1783, 241 in February, and so on.¹⁰⁷ As the demand for provisions remained steady, the old problems associated with outside provisioning still troubled the supply chain on the Great Lakes. The new commandant, Capt. Daniel Robertson, surveyed the post's provisions in December 1782 and found that 1,112 pounds of flour, 506 pounds of oatmeal, and 200 gallons of peas were "unfit for human use." Also, 512 pounds of pork were spoiled, and while they were "unfit for the use of His Majesty's Troops," he thought they "may be apply'd to the use of Savages." Robertson also found that seven barrels of pork had been packed short.¹⁰⁸ Such problems were common sources of complaints throughout the Lakes, but they hurt most at remote outposts like Michilimackinac.¹⁰⁹

To add to the post's food troubles, fur trader George McBeath warned Robertson that the corn crop had failed around Detroit. This forced the post to rely on Saginaw, "the greatest Corn Post in this Country," where the Indians would certainly raise their prices to meet the increased demand.¹¹⁰ Robertson had already ordered a post buyer to go to L'Arbre Croche to buy two thousand bags of corn for the King's stores before the traders

¹⁰⁷"Returns of Corn," Sep. 24, 1781-Mar. 24, 1782, *MPHC*, 10:666; 11:325, 331, 339, 346, 352.

¹⁰⁸"Surveys of Provisions," Dec. 28, 1782, *MPHC*, 11:332.

¹⁰⁹Henry Hope to Haldimand, Oct. 19, 1782, *MPHC*, 10:656-59.

¹¹⁰McBeath to Robertson, Dec. 29, 1782, *MPHC*, 11:333.

were allowed to purchase any and, subsequently, to inflate the price.¹¹¹ After finalizing peace terms with the Americans, British policy turned to reducing the demand for food and presents at Michilimackinac by sending deputations to discourage Sioux and other groups of Western Indians from traveling to the posts. One such mission prevented one thousand Indians from traveling to the post, saving the cost of “two Bushels Corn with some Grease, a little Bread & Pork ... with Rum and other Presents,” for each man provisioned, according to Robertson.¹¹² Such large-scale provisioning was simply no longer feasible at Michilimackinac. Game animal populations had decreased, corn availability had become more prone to failure through soil exhaustion, and demand was up with the peacetime expansion of the fur trade. If local Indians could not supply the post with needed provisions, and if they were not needed for protection, then they were more hindrance than help to British interests. As British-American negotiations wore on into the 1780s for the transferal of Great Lakes posts to the new United States, the slowly declining status of local Indian groups as food providers would stress the interdependent trade relationship at the Straits.

Talk of Indian discontent pervaded the upper Great Lakes during the postwar period as the British garrison focused on the fur business, not knowing when treaty negotiations would force them to give up their new fort on Mackinac Island to the Americans. Indian agent Alexander McKee credited the rumblings to people “disaffected to us,” meaning Canadians and American rebels.¹¹³ But changing British policies restricting Indian presents and increased stress on the local food system helped fan the

¹¹¹Hope et al. to Robertson, Sep. 20, 1782, *MPHC*, 10:638-40.

¹¹²Robertson to Robert Mathews, Aug. 9, 1783, *WHC*, 11:173-74.

¹¹³McKee to John Johnson, June 2, 1784, *MPHC*, 20:229.

flames of Indian animosities. Through 1784 Robertson kept the fort on alert amidst rumors that Ottawas would soon attack the post. Despite being poorly provisioned, he promised Haldimand “they must give me a hearty Beating before they succeed.”¹¹⁴ But this was mostly bravado on Robertson’s part, and he later admitted that his small garrison was “by no means adequate to a Post in those Parts,” especially with the fur trade in full swing and local traders with “not less than four Thousand Packs” of furs and goods on hand and ready to be stolen.¹¹⁵

Robertson’s frustrations must have reached a peak during a confrontation with a local Indian legend. Matchekewis, a respected local Ojibwa war chief who had participated in and probably helped plan the 1763 assault on Fort Michilimackinac, had been a British ally ever since, and even had a house near the old mainland fort. In September 1784 he confronted Robertson, and “altho’ sober,” accused the British of being “all Lyers, Impostures, &c.” for talking Matchekewis’s people into fighting and dying during the American Revolution, only to “now despise them, and let them starve.” Matchekewis suggested angrily, “The Indians ought to chasse [the British] and [their] connections out of the country,” and promised to go to Quebec and make a more formal complaint.¹¹⁶ The Ojibwa chief, who claimed to have fought with Burgoyne at Saratoga and expected consideration for it, was clearly upset with Haldimand’s limits on Indian gifts. But his berating of Robertson might have been inspired by a general degradation of local Indian-white relations, in which Indians held less control of the practical necessities of life in the region.

¹¹⁴Robertson to Mathews, May 6, 1784, *MPHC*, 11:414.

¹¹⁵Robertson to Haldimand, Aug. 5, 1784, *MPHC*, 11:442.

¹¹⁶Robertson to Mathews, Sep. 7, 1784, *MPHC*, 11:453.

A vivid depiction of changes in Ottawa lifeways by 1787 is suggested by an account of an Indian council held that year. John Dease, the Indian agent at Mackinac Island, answered an urgent request from Ottawa leaders for a council at L'Arbre Croche. Since the end of the Seven Years' War, the Michilimackinac post had depended on the L'Arbre Croche Ottawa band as important allies in both war and peace, and especially needed the thousands of bushels of corn produced there annually. Unfortunately for the British, and even more so for the Ottawas, things had not gone well at L'Arbre Croche since the end of the Revolution. Four years earlier the entire corn crop failed, leaving both Indians and English scurrying to find a replacement for the lost bushels and depriving the Ottawas of seed corn for the following year. With no corn to be had at any price in the area, Robertson requested 400 bushels from Detroit to supply the Indians with seed, but it is unclear if he ever received them.¹¹⁷ Apparently the intervening years had provided little sustenance to L'Arbre Croche.

At the council on August 3, 1787, Kegeweskam, the L'Arbre Croche headman whom De Peyster later described as "the most subtle of all the chiefs," spoke with striking transparency about the conditions in his village, which he described as "no more than a Village of dead people."¹¹⁸ Kegeweskam mourned, "Our lands are exhausted, our hunts are ruined, no more Animals remain to call us out to the Woods, the only resource left to us is the cultivation of these sandy plains, and what we can procure from the water." Kegeweskam's speech was clearly an attempt to adjust perceived inequalities emerging in the Ottawa-British mutual economic relationship. Still, Kegeweskam's complaints contained an untypical note of desperation, though he upheld his reputation

¹¹⁷Robertson to Mathews, Oct. 29, 1783, *MPHC*, 11:395-96.

¹¹⁸*WHC*, 18:389; *MPHC*, 11:494.

for subtlety by reminding Dease that his village was “not lately the most peaceably inclined among the nations,” and that it had taken some effort on his part to prevent his young men from participating in revenge wars in the West. Kegeweskam also complained that with all trade goods in the region confined to a single Indian general store at Michilimackinac, which was frequently closed and inadequately stocked when open, his people often returned from visits to the post empty-handed. Dease promised that the trade situation would change soon and he gave the Ottawas gifts to hold them over, but Kegeweskam’s speech made clear the environmental pressures that were causing old amities to break down at the straits.¹¹⁹

By 1790, British interest in Michilimackinac was clearly waning, despite their continued occupation of the Lake posts well after the conclusion of peace in 1783. Sinclair’s grand plans for a mighty fort on Mackinac Island surrounded by a prosperous trading town and unlimited supplies of corn had not materialized. The trade had prospered, but the unfinished fort was already falling into ruin. In 1790, British commander in chief Lord Dorchester was losing interest in the post, reporting that “Michilimackinac can keep out only Indians,” unlike more substantial lake forts such as Niagara.¹²⁰ He might have been worried about defense against Americans, and sent Gother Mann of the Royal Engineers to survey the post. Mann observed that the fort was overbuilt as a defense against Indians or small arms, but insufficient to defend against artillery.¹²¹ The situation worsened three years later when Captain William Doyle, one of a long line of commandants in the 1790s, reported that heavy rains had made a “38-foot

¹¹⁹*MPHC*, 11: 490-96 at 494.

¹²⁰Dorchester to W. W. Grenville, Mar. 8, 1790, *MPHC*, 12:22-23.

¹²¹“Report on the State of Fort Lernoult, Michilimackinac, &c.,” Mar. 3, 1790, *MPHC*, 12:30-37.

breach in the wall” and the barracks were in “a ruinous state.”¹²² With Indians busy fighting Americans farther south in the mid-1790s, and Americans eager to take control of the Great Lakes posts, British authorities began to look for other places to administer their operations in the upper lakes.

Conditions were certainly unpleasant for residents of the island fort during the last British year at Michilimackinac. Keeper of the Indian store Thomas Duggan did not even have a house to live in for the entire year, and was unsuccessful in arguing with his superiors in the Indian Department for a bigger allotment of firewood and a rum allowance; in fact, he was living mostly on whitefish.¹²³ After the Treaty of Greenville in 1795, the first major land cession by Indians to the new American government in the Old Northwest, the British Indian Department worried that natives were being drawn to Detroit from all over by offers from “land jobbers” who had been buying up Indian lands; according to assistant Indian superintendent Joseph Chew, “some Millions of acres have been sold to them for little more than a Keg of Rum.”¹²⁴

Indians near the Mackinac Straits had lost some of their old grip on the food supply, but still engaged in provisioning. Ottawas and Ojibwas brought in corn and sugar for the use of the garrison and their contributions were noted in official certificates signed by the post commandant. For example, on May 26, 1796, the Ottawas of L’Arbre Croche supplied forty mococks¹²⁵ of maple sugar. Other local Indians made similar contributions of sugar and corn, all officially noted in post certificates, but whether these were food

¹²²Doyle to R. J. England, May 16, 1793, *MPHC*, 12:48-49.

¹²³Duggan to Prideaux Selby, Jan. 10, 1796, *MPHC*, 12:192-93.

¹²⁴Selby to Chew, Apr. 19, 1796, *MPHC*, 12:200-01.

¹²⁵Birch bags holding up to fifty pounds each.

sales or gifts is unclear.¹²⁶ Only small issues of provisions left the post. Between January 25 and May 24 only thirty-one bags of corn were issued as presents out of the Indian store.¹²⁷ British authorities planned to build a new post on St. Joseph Island, a remote but strategic location at the mouth of the St. Mary's River, and any Indians who wished to retain their old allegiance with the crown were encouraged to move there. With the removal of the British garrison on September 1, 1796, Indians who chose to stay at Michilimackinac prepared for the changes and challenges of life under the American regime.

During the American era, Ottawas and Ojibwas in the northern Great Lakes continued to operate in an economy that was familiar to them, but without as much influence. Through their roles as trading partners and consumers in the fur trade and as warriors in the various European disputes that occasionally roiled British North America, Great Lakes Indians had managed to maintain power and influence in the cultural and political contests of the eighteenth century. But their importance as suppliers of food and provisions is often overlooked. Throughout the British period of occupation at the Straits of Mackinac and during the French regime that preceded it, Europeans in the backwoods depended on local Indians who taught them centuries-old methods of growing, catching, and killing food, and regularly provided it to the newcomers for a price. In return, Indians received trade goods and alcohol, which had become valued necessities of life. The relationship between the British garrisons, Canadian and British traders, and native men and women at the forts of Michilimackinac was one of interdependence, but Indians'

¹²⁶"Certification of Indian Supplies of Sugar," Mar. 26-June 14, 1796, *MPHC*, 12: 208, 215-16, 240.

¹²⁷"Corn and Sugar Issued as Indian Presents," July 12, 1796, *MPHC*, 12:207.

roles as food providers decreased when enough settlers and ships could ply the Lakes and supply provisions. When farmers and loggers arrived to strip away Lower Michigan's forests and plow the land, Indians who had spent generations as masters of the local food chain saw their economic importance and cultural influence increasingly challenged amidst the realities of nineteenth-century America.

In 1835 Father Francis Pierz, a Leopoldine missionary, began his work among the Michigan Indians. His assignment was the new L'Arbre Croche mission, built at Harbor Springs about twenty miles from Cross Village, the site of the old Ottawa village of L'Arbre Croche. In 1847 Pierz described the Ottawas of Cross Village and his mission:

There are among them good carpenters, joiners and coopers – they build neat and substantial houses. They are assiduous in cultivating their farms, which they bought from the government and sell much fruit and vegetables. The women are also very industrious and have great proficiency in household economy, making all the clothes for their families, and mats, baskets and other fancy work with porcupine quills, which display great taste and skill. In fine, I can truly assert, of the Indians of these missions, that they make such progress in their schools and in civilization as fully to satisfy their superiors; that they have gained the esteem of the whites, and deserve all the favor of our government.¹²⁸

Father Pierz missed the point. The Ottawas of L'Arbre Croche never went away and never lost their abilities to produce food and crafts. Their society remained as dynamic as it had ever been, as was true of native peoples throughout the upper Great Lakes well into the nineteenth century and beyond. They are still there today, as any casual visitor to modern-day Cross Village can attest. Descriptions such as Pierz's belie the ongoing influence that Mackinac area natives held in the region; indeed, his list of Ottawa attributes unintentionally shows how much continuity of tradition they had maintained. But such paternalism was just part of the price that the old provisioners of

¹²⁸Mary Belle Shurtleff, *Old Arbre Croche* (n.p., 1945), 25.

Fort Michilimackinac paid for their lives in the new republic. Left to themselves in the rugged environment and economy of northern Michigan and unwilling to leave their homeland, the L'Arbre Croche Ottawas used their valuable skills to adapt to changing circumstances and assimilate themselves into American society. Subsequent generations of whites measured them not by their long tradition of agricultural effectiveness or their skillful adaptations, but by the apparent success of their assimilation to Euro-American ways. In a supreme and unfair irony, L'Arbre Croche's twentieth-century ethnographer Mary Belle Shurtleff even credited Father Pierz with teaching the Ottawas how to farm.

CHAPTER FOUR

A YEAR AT NIAGARA:
Seneca-British Coexistence Strategies, 1763-1764

In early September 1763 the garrison of Fort Niagara felt lucky. They had been spared the fates of Fort Michilimackinac and many smaller western forts, which had been taken or destroyed in the Indian rebellion that would soon be named after the Ottawa leader Pontiac. Niagara lay within the nominal territory of the Seneca Nation, and some of them had become disaffected with the British regime. Some of the western group of Senecas from the Genesee River area had joined in the rebellion, and may have played a role in fomenting the uprising in the first place. They had long been friendlier to the old French regime in Canada than most of their English-allied Iroquois kin, and they saw the Indian war as a way to assert their primacy in the affairs of the region. However, except for a few small skirmishes, the belligerent Genesees had not yet exposed the Niagara corridor to the kind of violence that had roiled through the Great Lakes region earlier that summer.

This was vital to British hopes because Niagara was the main supply point for all the western posts, and any chance of relieving besieged Fort Detroit and quelling the rebellion would begin there. In the meantime British authorities continued to parley with western Indian groups, and to that end the sloop *Michigan* had sailed into Lake Erie on August 26 carrying provisions for Fort Detroit and an Iroquois delegation to meet with Pontiac's besieging Indians. The small delegation included a Mohawk friend of Sir

William Johnson, and their mission was a routine peace negotiation. But soon after the ship entered Lake Erie it was cast ashore, and an effort to reclaim its wreckage from the lakefront started a chain of events that brought the full force of the Indian uprising to the Niagara Strait.

Niagara's role in the Indian uprising of 1763 has often been afforded less prominence in studies of the rebellion than more familiar events at Detroit, Michilimackinac, and Pittsburgh.¹ Pontiac and his Ottawa, Chippewa, and Shawnee allies have usually garnered more attention than the western Seneca group, despite the Genesee Senecas' roles as early instigators and supporters of the rebellion and their success in overthrowing Forts Venango, Le Boeuf, and Presque Isle. The Seneca attack at Devil's Hole on the Niagara portage is usually noted as an important British defeat, but not as prominent as other events such as the Battle of Bushy Run near Fort Pitt or the ambush of Dalyell's men near Detroit. Johnson's Indian peace conference in 1764 is usually depicted as a foregone British diplomatic success because it resulted in the supposedly

¹Studies of the uprising typically devote only a few pages to events in New York, preferring instead to concentrate on the western center of the rebellion. See Francis Parkman, *The Conspiracy of Pontiac and the Indian War after the Conquest of Canada* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1994); Howard H. Peckham, *Pontiac and the Indian Uprising* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994); William R. Nester, *"Haughty Conquerors": Amherst and the Great Indian Uprising of 1763* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000); Gregory Evans Dowd, *War Under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations and the British Empire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); David Dixon, *Never Come To Peace Again: Pontiac's Uprising and the Fate of the British Empire in North America* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005).

desperate Senecas ceding control of the Niagara corridor.² From the British point of view and with the benefit of hindsight, these interpretations seem appropriate. However, studying these events from the Seneca perspective complicates the picture. Their attack at Devil's Hole made perfect sense given the portage's strategic importance and the ever-increasing British presence at the vital Niagara strait. Their capitulation and cession of the strip to the British in 1764 continued a diplomatic strategy employed by the Iroquois twice before in the eighteenth century, and the Genesee Senecas had no reason to think that the cession would mean their eventual exclusion from managing Niagara's affairs. From the summer of 1763 to the summer of 1764, Senecas near Niagara used the best methods available to them, both violent and diplomatic, to maintain as much of their land and culture as possible in the face of British economic and military expansion.

For centuries Indian groups traveled through the Niagara straits, following a well-defined portage route around Niagara Falls. Archaeologists studying the Lower Landing site near present-day Lewiston, New York have found evidence of use from the

²In their lengthy studies of the uprising, Nester, Dowd and Dixon devote only a paragraph each to the Niagara peace conference. Nester is especially complimentary of Johnson's diplomatic efforts in forcing Seneca submission. He asserts unconvincingly that in gaining the Iroquois' cooperation in fighting rebel Indians "the Iroquois had little choice but to accept Johnson's demands. The Six Nations were now surrounded by Union Jacks floating above frontier forts." According to Nester, the Senecas "begged for mercy" at Johnson Hall in March 1764, and at the Niagara conference in August Johnson "was generous with British friends and tough toward foes," which glosses over the overabundance of "friends" and virtual absence of any "foes" there, except for the Senecas and a small band of Hurons. *Haughty Conquerors*, 191, 193, 208. Dixon gives only a brief paragraph about the submission of the "meek" Senecas at Niagara. *Never Come To Peace Again*, 228.

prehistoric period through the French and British occupations of the region.³ The Portage Site, located at the top of the Niagara escarpment where the portage path begins the steep decline to the Lower Landing, produced artifacts revealing portaging at the site as early as 1000 C. E. and continuing into the historical period.⁴ Heavy Indian use of the Niagara River and the portage around Niagara Falls is not surprising, considering the passage's strategic and practical importance. As French authorities realized by the 1670s, the portage around the falls was the only land carriage in a continuous waterway stretching between Lake Ontario and the Gulf of Mexico, and therefore represented an important key to the western fur trade.⁵

Early French visitors to the region reported Senecas present near the Niagara River throughout the late seventeenth century, following their expansion into the area in the 1650s.⁶ In 1678 Jesuit missionary Louis Hennepin described a "very fine road"

³Stuart D. Scott, *An Archaeological Survey of Artpark and the Lower Landing, Lewiston, New York* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1993), 7-17. Archaeological work carried out at the Lower Landing Site, or Joncaire Site, was a salvage operation conducted by amateur archaeologists, and while they preserved many telling artifacts, many more were deemed unimportant and discarded. The surviving material definitely shows long-term Indian occupation and use of the site, but more specific information that may have been available through analysis of artifact placement is not available. Though many of the same team later excavated the Portage Site at the top of the cliff, more careful methods and analysis produced richer results.

⁴Marian E. White, "Late Woodland Archaeology in the Niagara Frontier of New York and Ontario," in *The Late Prehistory of the Lake Erie Drainage Basin: A 1972 Symposium Revised*, ed. David S. Brose (Cleveland, OH: Cleveland Museum of Natural History, 1976), 115-16.

⁵Frontenac to Colbert, Nov. 14, 1674, *NYCD*, 9:116-21.

⁶Marian E. White, *Iroquois Culture History in the Niagara Frontier Area of New York State* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1961), 50.

already existing on both sides of the river.⁷ But Indians used the straits as a highway and a place for hunting and fishing, and without permanent native settlements the area became irresistible to French expansionists. In a 1676 memoir, French merchant Charles Aubert de la Chesnaye did not mention Indians or permanent settlements, and he hoped that the important passage might be secured by settling French families along the route.⁸ By the 1670s it must have become clear to Indians in the Niagara region that the strait interested Europeans, and that the well-traveled portage routes around the falls would become zones of friction and negotiation between natives and newcomers.

Instead of French settlers, the Senecas would soon receive much more troubling visitors when over two thousand troops under the command of the Marquis de Denonville invaded the Niagara region in 1687. Denonville's invasion was short-lived, but he built a small fort at the outlet of the Niagara River, believing that the outpost would keep the Senecas "in check and in fear" if properly garrisoned. Denonville hoped his fort, along with Fort Cataraqui (later called Fort Frontenac) at the eastern end of Lake Ontario, would help establish French dominance over the lake and its trade.⁹ Denonville knew that the Senecas would not approve his attempt to seize control of the Niagara passage, and this expectation was soon realized. The Five Nations had already met the year before with New York's governor Thomas Dongan and agreed to tear down any forts the French might build south of Lake Ontario, and Dongan agreed to help the Iroquois against

⁷Frank H. Severance, *Studies of the Niagara Frontier* (Buffalo, NY: Buffalo Historical Society, 1911), 315. Hennepin's account of the region contains fanciful descriptions of the falls that greatly overstate their height, so some skepticism is in order. Still, his description of the portage trails seems reasonable, though one might question the "fineness" of the roads.

⁸Frank H. Severance, *An Old Frontier of France: The Niagara Region and Adjacent Lakes under French Control* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1917), 1:35.

⁹Denonville to Seignelay, May 8, 1686, *NYCD*, 9:287-92.

French threats.¹⁰ Dongan gave no credence to the French general's argument that the area was claimed for France because Robert de la Salle had built a small house at the fort's location in 1676, and he demanded that Denonville abandon the fort and remove the four-hundred-man garrison there.¹¹ Denonville relented in 1688, citing "the bad air, and the difficulty of revictualling that post" and noted that he had always meant the fort as a place of refuge for threatened Indians, though none had used it for that purpose.¹² But Denonville's abandonment of Niagara represented only a temporary pause in French plans to fortify the strait, and violence between the Iroquois and French-allied Indians in Canada continued through the following decade.

By the end of the seventeenth century, warfare and disease had depleted Iroquois ranks and they began looking for a way out of constant war. In 1700 Iroquois groups sent delegations to both Montreal and Albany to conduct peace negotiations that would establish the Five Nations as neutral middlemen in the economic and political struggles between the New France and New York.¹³ Indian leaders knew that the French retained their designs to fortify the Niagara Strait and had already begun establishing a post at Detroit, in what most Iroquois considered part of their conquered territory. To counter French expansion, twenty Iroquois headmen granted the king of England a deed to their

¹⁰Lawrence H. Leder, ed., *The Livingston Indian Records* (Gettysburg, PA: Pennsylvania Historical Association, 1956), 101.

¹¹"Establishment of the French at Niagara," *NYCD*, 9:335-36; "Examination of Adandidaghko," *NYCD*, 9:435; Dongan to Palmer, *NYCD*, 9:476; "Dongan's First Demand of French Agents," *NYCD*, 9:520-21.

¹²"Journal of Denonville and Champigny," *NYCD*, 9:393-98.

¹³Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 206-13; J. A. Brandão and William A. Starna, "The Treaties of 1701: A Triumph of Iroquois Diplomacy," *Ethnohistory* 43:2 (Spring 1996): 209-44. Richter argues that desperation led the Iroquois to seek neutrality, while Brandão and Starna insist that the 1701 treaties were advantageous to all parties concerned and represented a diplomatic victory for the Iroquois.

beaver hunting grounds, which encompassed most of Michigan and Upper Canada between Lakes Michigan and Erie. The land cession included “the great falls Oakinagaro,” or Niagara, and gave the British “power to erect Forts and castles” in any part of the ceded territory. In return, the British were required to protect Iroquois rights to hunt in the region forever, “free of all disturbances expecting to be protected therein by the Crown of England.”¹⁴

Of course, this “deed” was not a genuine land cession in either a legal or practical sense. Western Indians, many of them allied to the French, dominated the ceded territories, and the French did not recognize the deed at all. Any British forts built in the ceded territory would certainly cause conflict between the two European superpowers with or without Iroquois permission. The 1701 deed, which was quickly forgotten in French-Anglo diplomacy, shows that the Iroquois desired and needed their British allies’ protection, which they hoped would give them some leverage to use in their dealings with Montreal and Paris.¹⁵ As for the Niagara Strait, the Iroquois never intended to transfer actual ownership of the vital passage to Europeans either in or after 1701.

Over the next twenty years, hundreds of French traders, settlers, and soldiers traveled over the Niagara portage, and paid Indian carriers helped move the baggage. Exactly when Senecas and other native groups began to work for wages on the portage is unknown. In 1707 Senecas had established a fortified post on the river, encouraged by Chabert de Joncaire the Elder, a French interpreter and adopted Seneca whose family would later establish a permanent trading post at the Lower Landing. By 1715 Senecas

¹⁴“Deed from the Five Nations to the King of their Beaver Hunting Ground,” *NYCD*, 4:908-11.

¹⁵Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 212.

definitely worked with Joncaire as porters on the passage, and may have done so much earlier.¹⁶ A memoir by an unknown writer includes a description: "Above the first hill¹⁷ there is a Seneca village of about ten cabins, where Indian corn, beans, peas, water-melons, and pumpkins are raised, all of which are very fine. These Senecas are employed by the French, from whom they earn money by carrying the goods of those who are going to the Upper Country." Seneca porters used their pay to buy "mitasses" (leggings), shirts, and ammunition. Some would "pilfer" to augment their pay. When the French traders returned from trapping, the Senecas would accept peltry in lieu of currency for carrying the huge packs of furs around the falls.¹⁸

Not all Indians present at the portage were workers. Indian wage laborers were also consumers, and at Niagara they had access to French goods not available in most parts of Iroquoia, including liquor. French officials reasonably expected that native supervisors would keep laborers out of trouble. In 1744 New France's governor-general Charles de Beauharnois reported that the Senecas kept a chief and others at the Niagara portage "to settle any differences that liquor might occasion among the Indians in the work that they had to do at the Carrying Place."¹⁹ Permanent Indian wage labor at Niagara demonstrates the extent to which Iroquois groups had become dependent on European trade goods and business, but it also shows how Indians living near Europeans

¹⁶Severance, *An Old Frontier of France*, 1:163; *NYCD*, 9:805-08.

¹⁷The writer mentions four hills, counting the steep cliff above the Lower Landing as the first. Later observers mention only three large hills on the portage.

¹⁸"Memoir on the Indians Between Lake Erie and the Mississippi, 1718," *NYCD*, 9:885. This Seneca village is mentioned again in a 1736 census of Indians in Canada. "Enumeration of the Indian Tribes Connected With the Government of Canada, 1736" *NYCD*, 9:1057.

¹⁹Beauharnois to Maurapas, Nov. 7, 1744, *NYCD*, 9:1111-12.

found ways to coexist with the newcomers while retaining as much of their traditional cultures as possible.²⁰

Indian wage labor at the Niagara portage was only one example of larger economic changes occurring throughout Iroquoia. As early as 1704 a similar arrangement had sprung up at the Oneida portage, south of Lake Oneida and the only land carriage between Albany and Lake Ontario.²¹ In 1709 a report by Albany aldermen during Queen Anne's War noted that one significant expense of a proposed campaign against Canada would be the "200 Indians kept in Pay for Skouts & to hunt at ye Carrying Place" during the winter.²² Naturalist John Bartram described a small permanent settlement at the Oneida portage in 1743, with a population of "very nice" Onondagas who subsisted by "catching fish and assisting the Albany people to hawl their *Bateaus* and carry their goods around the falls."²³

Despite Bartram's rosy depiction of the Oneida portage village, there were limits to the amount of "niceness" that British traders might expect on the road to Oswego. During a 1740 council in Albany, Onondaga sachems agreed to help keep the passage from Albany to Oswego open and safe, especially at the Oneida Carrying Place where traders were "generally in want of assistance" and the Indians promised to "help them there in carrying their smaller goods, but the large casks and Bales they may have rid over." The sachems knew the value of a constant Indian presence at the Oneida portage, and they remained skeptical about paternalistic British claims that posts and open trade

²⁰Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 262.

²¹Leder, *Livingston Indian Records*, 214.

²²*Ibid.*, 214.

²³John Bartram, Lewis Evans, and Conrad Weiser, *A Journey from Pennsylvania to Onondaga in 1743* (Barre, MA: Imprint Society, 1973), 64-65.

routes worked mostly to the Indians' advantage. "We think Brother," one Onondaga representative told an Albany official, "That your people who trade there (Oswego) have the most advantage by it, and that it is as good for them as a Silver mine."²⁴ Iroquois groups understood their roles as players in the new European economic system, and realized that work in the fur trade offered them diplomatic and political opportunities as well as economic benefits.

While Senecas and other Indians began migrating to portage locations to find wage labor in the early eighteenth century, France and England worked to position their trading posts for their best advantage in the increasingly important fur trade. French posts erected at Detroit (1701) and Michilimackinac (1715) helped capture a good deal of the Great Lakes business, but Canadian authorities never gave up on the idea of a post at the Niagara River to grab the Upper Canada trade before it could move into Lake Ontario and on to Albany.²⁵ By 1720 Joncaire's diplomatic efforts among the Indians paid off when some of the Western Senecas allowed him to establish a small trading house at the Lower Landing site, about eight miles below the falls.²⁶ Since 1701 the Iroquois had tried to establish themselves as neutral middlemen in the trade between western Great Lakes Indians and Albany traders, and barring French and British forts on Lake Ontario was

²⁴"Conference Between Lieutenant-Governor Clarke and the Six Nations," *NYCD*, 6:172-79.

²⁵"Proposal to Take Possession of Niagara in Canada, 1706," *NYCD*, 9:773-75.

²⁶Journal of Schuyler and Livingston," *NYCD*, 5:542-45; "Journal of Lawrence Clawsen's Visit to Niagara," *NYCD*, 5:550-51; Robert Livingston to Peter Schuyler, Aug. 23, 1723, *NYCD*, 5:559-60.

essential in keeping the trade passing through Iroquoia.²⁷ Joncaire's new post represented a step backward in the Iroquois plan, and a British post built at Irondequoit in 1721 eroded their policy further.

The Senecas' position became even worse in 1726 when Joncaire went behind their backs, appealed to a group of Onondagas eager to prevent war between France and England, and received permission to build a trading house at the site of Denonville's old fort. This fortified "house of peace," so called because the Iroquois League would brook no new "forts" in their territory, formed the center of French and British occupation of the Niagara River for the next seventy years. With Joncaire's trading house at the portage and the new fort at the outlet of the Niagara, the French now exercised considerable control over trade passing in and out of Lake Ontario. Albany traders would have to offer substantially better prices to induce Indians to make the overland trek through New York.²⁸

With this new French incursion at Niagara, Senecas and other Iroquois groups moved to minimize the damage. At an Albany council in September 1726, New York's governor William Burnet suggested to a small delegation of Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca sachems that they might reinforce the deed negotiated in 1701, which had been largely forgotten in the interim. This suited the Iroquois representatives, who still hoped "His Majesty would be pleased to defend them from the Incroachments of the French."²⁹

²⁷Cadwallader Colden, "Colden's Account of the Conference Between Governor Burnet and the Five Nations, 1721" in *Collections of the New York Historical Society* (New York: The Society, 1868-1975), 50:128-34; Burnet to Lords of Trade, June 25, 1723, *NYCD*, 5:684-85.

²⁸For an overview of the French and British fort controversies of the 1720s, see Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 246-54.

²⁹"A Conference Held at Albany," *NYCD*, 5:799.

This new deed of "Surrender and Submission," signed by seven Iroquois sachems from three nations, gave the English king mastery "all along the river of Oniagara." But as in the earlier deed, the British role would be that of protectors rather than landlords, defending the ceded territory for the Indians' perpetual use.³⁰

This new deed would have no greater impact than the 1701 cession on diplomatic efforts between Indians and Europeans. The French completed their fortified post at Niagara, and Albany went ahead with a new post at Oswego in 1727 to counter the French expansion and grab some of the Lake Ontario commerce. Furthermore, most Iroquois groups rejected the authority of the small negotiating team to deal away sovereignty over so much of their hunting land.³¹ But the deed exemplified the willingness of some Iroquois to play European diplomatic games for their own benefit. Indians could still use the lands as they always had, and their ability to do this would be protected by their increasingly powerful British allies. Transference of title was something that Indians understood to be important to the Europeans, and British negotiators might be able to use it to defend the territories against further French incursions. In ceding these lands the Iroquois representatives gave away nothing, and expected the protection they would need to negotiate their way through the complex economic and political problems of the eighteenth century.

Even with Fort Niagara guarding the lower end of the strait and a new fort, Little Niagara, commanding the portage's landing above the falls after 1751, France required the consent and cooperation of the Iroquois League to maintain its control over a

³⁰"Deed in Trust from Three of the Five Nations of Indians to the King," *NYCD*, 5:800-01.

³¹Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 252-53.

substantial part of the Lake Ontario trade. This was especially true regarding the western group of Senecas, who maintained their principal settlement on the Genesee River about sixty miles from Niagara. To keep the Genesee Senecas happy, French authorities at Niagara kept Seneca carriers employed on the waterfall portage and other land carriages in the region. By 1750 this had become quite an operation. Swedish traveler Peter Kalm reported seeing "above 200 Indians, most of them belonging to the Six Nations, busy in carrying packs of furs, chiefly of deer and bear, over the carrying-place" and noted that these Indians would receive 20 pence for each pack carried around the falls.³²

In 1757 French officer Louis-Antoine de Bougainville confirmed the size and importance of Indian involvement on portages at Niagara and Presque Isle, near modern-day Erie, Pennsylvania, and encouraged greater use of native carriers. He reported that wagons were almost never usable on the portage roads anytime but summer, and that only Indians and packhorses could travel over the muddy trails. Furthermore, Bougainville asserted that French policy, "especially in time of war," demanded Indian employment on the portages. Indian porters would "hinder the tribes that might be badly intentioned" from attacking and help keep valuable trade and military goods moving. Bougainville noted that Indians at Presque Isle earned six francs per sack carried, twice the rate paid to French porters, but the Indians' superior abilities were worth the added expense. At Niagara, where 250 to 300 trips traversed the portage each year, Bougainville thought that Indian porters were even more important.³³

³²Severance, *Studies of the Niagara Frontier*, 326.

³³Bougainville, Louis-Antoine, "Memoir of Bougainville" *WHC*, 18:314-354, at 328-29.

Decades of commerce passing through the Niagara region brought French traders, soldiers, and missionaries into frequent contact and commerce with Indians using the passage and living nearby. The relationship was not always easy. Small French garrisons at Fort Niagara lived in frequent fear of rumored Indian assaults on the fort and its personnel.³⁴ Genesee Senecas had never enjoyed having a French fort in their country, but those living near Niagara learned to make the best of the situation. Their main complaint with the French conduct of the portage was when increased use of horses and wagons threatened the carriers' wages. Onondaga chief Chinoniata complained for the Iroquois League about this threat to Indian livelihoods in a 1756 congress with New France's governor-general, the Marquis de Vaudreuil. "Formerly when we were coming from war we had the Niagara portage; twas promised us that we would always possess it," Chinoniata reminded Vaudreuil. But lately horses had been hauling more goods, and the Onondaga chief asked the French governor to preserve the carrying concession on the portage for Indian workers.³⁵ Iroquois leaders may have been nervous about the expanded French military presence at Niagara since the outbreak of war in 1754. The fort's garrison increased from about thirty soldiers and officers in 1754 to a defensive force of over six hundred in 1756. The fort itself was badly in need of repair by then, and was renovated in 1756 to include expanded earthen breastworks and several new buildings. Throughout this period, western Indians continued to throng to the fort, as many as 2,000 at a time

³⁴Severance, *An Old Frontier of France*, 1:292, 322-23, 355.

³⁵"Indian Conference," *NYCD*, 10:503. A Seneca delegation visited Montreal in April 1757, and complained directly to Vaudreuil about the increased used of carts on the portage, stating that the Senecas had "formerly" handled all portaging themselves. This implies that Indian porters may have already been excluded from the Niagara carrying trade before the British took over. "Account of the Embassy of the Five Nations," *NYCD*, 10:559.

during the summer seasons. On the eve of British occupation, Fort Niagara and the Niagara portage had become major centers of cultural confluence.

On July 6, 1759, the Niagara Senecas' lives changed. A few miles from Fort Niagara a British force of 1,500 Regulars and 1,000 Indians from all six Iroquois nations, including Genesee Senecas, landed on the Lake Ontario shore to begin the siege and eventual reduction of the fort. Within the fort 500 French troops and about 100 Indians, many of them local residents, lay in wait. The presence of so many hitherto neutral Iroquois warriors allied with the British created a dilemma for the Niagara Senecas. Working at the portage had helped them maintain friendly relations with the fort's garrison and its commander, Captain Pierre Pouchot, but this new military alliance between the British and the rest of the Six Nations Confederacy placed Niagara Senecas in the middle of a conflict between their French friends and their own Iroquois countrymen. Local Seneca leader Kaendaé decided to try diplomacy to maneuver out of the dilemma, but his efforts over three days produced little to his people's advantage except a general Iroquois withdrawal from the siege, a dubious achievement since siege work was largely the domain of engineers and artillerymen. Kaendaé had little choice but to turn to Pouchot and to negotiate an exit from the fort for his people.³⁶ On July 26, after defeating a relief force of 1,500 French soldiers and Ohio-based Indians just south of the

³⁶M. (Pierre) Pouchot, *Memoir Upon the Late War in North America Between the French and the English, 1755-60*, ed. and trans. Franklin B. Hough (Roxbury, MA: W. Elliot Woodward, 1866), 1:171-78.

fort at La Belle Famille, Sir William Johnson accepted Pouchot's surrender.³⁷ Fort Niagara and the portage passed into British control, and local Indians would have to find ways to continue their European-Indian coexistence under a new regime.

After the reduction of Fort Niagara, Indian superintendent Johnson was left with a problem concerning the local Senecas. Though their first allegiance was clearly with Pouchot and his garrison, they had remained neutral during the siege, and they could not be removed from their homes near the portage when they had not joined the French in arms against British forces. On August 2 Johnson told Hugh Farquhar, Fort Niagara's new commander, that local Senecas would be friendly "at least in appearance." Johnson advised Farquhar to "receive them with civility; give them provisions, and assure them that traders will soon arrive to buy their skins more to their advantage than ever the French did." But Johnson also ordered Farquhar not to admit more than twenty of the Senecas into the fort at a time, even if they arrived in large groups.³⁸

Johnson meant also to speak with Genesee Senecas who had taken part in the siege, but they had speedily returned home after Fort Niagara's fall. To the other allied Iroquois nations Johnson sent three strings of wampum, along with his thanks for "the good salve" they had provided for his "wounds," by which he meant his troubles in reducing Fort Niagara. To the Genesee Senecas he sent only one string, a rebuke for their

³⁷Johnson commanded the besieging army after the death of Brig. Gen. John Prideaux. The full story of the Fort Niagara siege from the French perspective is in Pouchot, *Memoir*, 1:165-206. Johnson's more utilitarian account of the siege is in "The Prideaux and Johnson Orderly Book," *WJP*, 3:48-105. See also Lawrence Henry Gipson, *The Great War for the Empire: The Victorious Years, 1758-1760* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), 348-55, and Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 331-39.

³⁸"Orders for William Farquhar et al.," *WJP*, 13:157-59.

disrespect.³⁹ On September 25 Johnson made his point clearer. He sent the Seneca Nation a black string and warned them to ensure the safety of the Niagara garrison, lest commander-in-chief Jeffrey Amherst “be obliged to take proper measures” to punish them. The initial returns of his diplomacy were not encouraging. Several Iroquois chiefs agreed to watch over Niagara but made no guarantees for the garrison’s safety. They then made it clear they expected more smiths, traders, and goods at posts in their countries. The Iroquois League would help keep the Genesee Senecas in line, but not for free.⁴⁰

During the first year of British occupation the garrison of Fort Niagara helped prepare the portage for resumption of trade and, of more immediate importance, military traffic. In 1760 Amherst was preparing his attack on Montreal, and plans for rebuilding Fort Presque Isle on Lake Erie, which had been destroyed during the war, required a giant influx of traffic rolling through the portage.⁴¹ Years of war and the siege had caused much damage at the strait. Fort Niagara required extensive rebuilding, Joncaire’s trading post had been abandoned, and Fort Little Niagara had been burned down by a group of Indians from Johnson’s detachment soon after the end of the siege.⁴² By the end of 1760 Fort Niagara’s garrison had restored Little Niagara and improved the portage road enough to allow wagons, oxen, and carts to transport goods that had been carried previously by Indian porters. Whether local Senecas approved or disapproved of this increased use of wagons and draft animals is unknown. Neither Johnson nor Amherst mentioned any controversy involving lost portage jobs. It is also possible that with the

³⁹“Journal of the Niagara Campaign,” *WJP*, 13:120.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 156.

⁴¹Brian Leigh Dunnigan, “Portaging Niagara,” *Inland Seas* 42:3 (Spring 1986): 181-82.

⁴²Johnson to Amherst, July 31, 1759, *WJP*, 3:115-16.

increased militarization of the Niagara straits after 1756, carts and draft animals may have begun replacing Indians even during the French regime. But Genesee Senecas still recognized the Niagara region as part of their country and hunting grounds, with or without Indians working at the portage.⁴³

Jeffrey Amherst felt that the best way to secure the portage would be to populate the area with British traders and families, which would ensure friendly control of the portage and reduce the presence of Indians in the region. In May 1761 he licensed a group of former army officers to monopolize trade at Fort Little Niagara and to operate on the portage. The traders began building a settlement and raising corn, which Johnson feared would confirm the Genesee Senecas's long-held suspicion that the British planned "rooting them out of their Country."⁴⁴ Johnson warned Amherst that these settlements would violate the 1726 agreement with the Iroquois, which restricted European settlement and reserved the Niagara portage area for the crown.⁴⁵ The commander-in-chief refused to remove the traders, despite Johnson's urgent pleas that the settlement would upset the Senecas. "It was never my design to take an inch from them," Amherst insisted, and he assured Johnson that the settlements were military necessities and not permanent.⁴⁶

Unhappy Senecas was not the only problem caused by Amherst's trading grant. Albany merchants based at Fort Niagara began to complain about the Little Niagara

⁴³During the two years following the British takeover of Niagara, portaging was the domain of the army, and they used many methods to carry goods along the portage road, including horses, soldiers, and finally oxen. For a description of portaging during the early British tenure at Niagara, see McConnell, *Army and Empire*, 16-17.

⁴⁴Johnson to Daniel Claus, May 20, 1761, *WJP*, 10:270.

⁴⁵Johnson to Amherst, July 29, 1761, *WJP*, 10:322.

⁴⁶Amherst to Johnson, Aug. 9, 1761, *WJP*, 3:515.

monopoly and requested the right to trade above the falls as well.⁴⁷ Amherst assured the Albany men that they were free to trade at Little Niagara as long they followed regulations.⁴⁸ But the complaints did not stop, and by the middle of 1762 he realized that his settlement plan would not work. In October Amherst withdrew his original permit for the Little Niagara consortium, though he still thought that “peopling of the Tracts of Land, situated near our Forts and particularly such a spot as the Carrying Place of Niagara” was the best way to secure the area for British use.⁴⁹ Almost everyone else in the region disagreed. With news of Indian unrest in the West, Amherst’s attempt to settle the portage could not have come at a worse time.

When news of the Niagara settlement controversy first reached Johnson, he was involved in planning a major conference with western Indians at Detroit and did not need any additional irritation. On his way to Detroit he stopped at Fort Niagara on July 24, 1761 and learned that Genesee Senecas disapproved of British efforts to garrison former French posts in the West. They saw Johnson’s Detroit conference as an attempt to “hem them in” and deprive them of their lands and livelihoods.⁵⁰ Two Genesee agents had already traveled to Detroit to build enthusiasm for a general uprising against the British, and Senecas had been stealing horses near Fort Pitt. Johnson needed to discover the depth of their disaffection and had summoned a Genesee delegation to meet him at Fort Niagara.⁵¹ On August 4 Seneca chief Sonojóana arrived at Niagara with bad news for

⁴⁷“Petition of Merchants of Albany to the Lords of Trade,” *NYCD*, 7:488-89.

⁴⁸Johnson to Amherst, Feb. 6, 1762, *WJP*, 3:620, 623; Amherst to Johnson, Feb. 14, 1762, *WJP*, 10:382-83.

⁴⁹Amherst to William Sharpe, Oct. 20, 1762, *NYCD*, 7:509.

⁵⁰“Journal to Detroit,” *WJP*, 13:227.

⁵¹Johnson to George Croghan, July 26, 1761, *WJP*, 10:319-20; Johnson to Daniel Claus, Aug. 9, 1761, *WJP*, 10:323-25.

Johnson. The full Seneca delegation had turned back to Genesee because one of the members had become ill, but they still wanted Johnson to give his messages to the few Senecas in attendance. This disappointed Johnson, and he was further dismayed when the Senecas denied sending agents to Detroit and blamed the stolen horses on their “impudent young men.” Johnson rejected what he characterized as their “Feigned Declarations of ignorance” and suggested that the Genesee Senecas should send chiefs to Detroit, where they might deny fomenting rebellion before all the assembled western nations.⁵² Iroquois representatives accompanying Johnson were clearly nervous about the purported Seneca schemes. Mohawk sachem Nickas warned the Genesees that unless they gave up “Thieving, Drunkenness & Quarrels” and found a way to coexist with the British, other Iroquois nations would oppose them.⁵³ Seneca disaffection at Niagara had begun to complicate British relations both with the western Indians and with their long-time Iroquois allies.

Alcohol sold at Niagara also complicated British efforts to make peace with Indians locally and in the West. Donald Campbell, commander of Fort Detroit, complained about this to Johnson in August 1761. Though he forbade the sale of liquor at Detroit, local Indians would buy it at Niagara and bring it home, making them “troublesome & ill to manage,” according to Campbell. Furthermore, the sale of rum at Niagara was so profitable that many traders brought little else to sell, depriving the posts at Detroit and Michilimackinac of provisions.⁵⁴ Col. Henry Bouquet was having the same problem at Fort Pitt. “The Traders engaged in that Illicite Trade, know the Country, avoid

⁵²“Niagara and Detroit Proceedings,” *WJP*, 3:463-66; “Journal to Detroit,” *WJP*, 13:236.

⁵³“Niagara and Detroit Proceedings,” *WJP*, 3:466-67.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 448-50.

the Posts and assisted by the Indians cannot be easily discovered,” Bouquet complained, and he advised Amherst to forbid liquor sales at all the posts, especially Niagara, which he claimed was “the greatest Inlett” for liquor brought into the backcountry.⁵⁵

Throughout the winter and spring of 1762, Amherst dispatched orders to all posts forbidding the sale of alcohol to Indians under any circumstances, creating immediate problems at Niagara.⁵⁶ Fort Niagara’s new commander, William Walters, reported that Indians visiting the fort complained about the restrictions, and continued to ask for rum “for their Refreshment.” Walters tried to convince them that refraining from drinking would promote health and economy, allowing them to “purchase every necessary of Life they wanted for their familys,” but the Indians expected rum to be sold at trading posts and persisted in their requests. Walters despaired that he would have trouble convincing Indians not to pester him for rum during the busy summer season.⁵⁷ Amherst’s restrictions on alcohol sales and gift giving in general helped further degrade British-Indian relations at Niagara.

A request for rum signaled a coming storm for the garrison of Niagara, already on alert in June 1763 after Pontiac and other western Indians began their uprising throughout the Great Lakes region. Local Seneca chief Wapackcamigat had come to the fort in search of rum. Niagara’s interpreter, Jean Baptiste de Couagne, refused him, and was dismayed when Wapackcamigat warned that if rum and gift restrictions continued, the British “must take Care of the consequence,” and that they should expect to hear some

⁵⁵Bouquet to Amherst, Mar. 7, 1762, *MPHC*, 19:131.

⁵⁶ Amherst to Johnson, Jan. 16, 1762, *WJP*, 10:354; Amherst to Johnson, Feb. 14, 1762, *WJP*, 10:382-83; “Journal of Indian Affairs,” *WJP*, 10:386-88.

⁵⁷William Walters to Johnson, Apr. 27, 1762, *WJP*, 3:721-23; Walters to Johnson, Apr. 5, 1762, *WJP*, 10:426-28.

“bad news” soon. The next day another Iroquois chief arrived and requested rum.

Couagne delayed him, but was made uneasy by these incessant friendship tests and news of fresh attacks on the frontier.⁵⁸ The situation worsened when Amherst and Johnson became convinced of Seneca involvement in the Indian attacks on Forts Venango, Le Boeuf, and Presque Isle, a chain of forts between Lake Erie and Fort Pitt.

Senecas seemed to care more about protecting their lands and preserving fair trade than about Pontiac and his message of cultural renewal. For example, Fort Venango’s attackers cited as reasons for their uprising the recent inflated expense of powder and goods at the posts, the lack of any means of redress of unfair trade practices, and the establishment and maintenance of new British posts, which convinced them that the British intended “to possess all their Country.”⁵⁹ Johnson blamed the Senecas’ disaffection on their proximity to Niagara, where they were “seated in the midst of assiduous Missionaries, and zealous Partizans, which (together with their vicinity to Niagara where they were continually receiving presents, provisions, &c.) contributed to establish their regard for the French.”⁶⁰ By late July small attacks around the Niagara portage threatened the safety of that vital lifeline, and Johnson feared for Detroit and the other upcountry posts if provisions could not be brought over the carrying place.⁶¹

Fort Niagara did not fall during the Indian uprising because an easier and more valuable target lay only six miles to the south. The fortress at the outlet of the Niagara River had proven a poor guard over commerce traveling between Lakes Erie and Ontario

⁵⁸Couagne to Johnson, June 5, 1763, *WJP*, 4:134-35.

⁵⁹The Seneca attackers forced the fort’s commander write out their reasons before executing him. Johnson to Amherst, July 11, 1763, *NYCD*, 7:533.

⁶⁰Johnson to Lords of Trade, July 1, 1763, *NYCD*, 7:525-27.

⁶¹Johnson to Lords of Trade, July 26, 1763, *NYCD*, 7:559-62.

because Indians could easily bypass the fort by land or water at night, trading their goods at Fort Little Niagara or other posts on the lakes. Fort Niagara served best as a place of defense and refuge for soldiers and local Indians still friendly to the British. It was Niagara's portage that was the crux of the region's defense. Most European goods traveling into America's interior passed over the six-mile land carriage, and though the strategic importance of the portage had been known for decades, the British conquerors of Niagara had never fortified the portage path. Only Fort Little Niagara, which had been strengthened in June 1763 and renamed Fort Schlosser, and the small post at the Lower Landing protected the carrying place. With Genesee Senecas now in open rebellion in Pennsylvania, traversing the Niagara portage through the Genesees' own territory must have been terrifying for teamsters and their military escorts. But only small skirmishes troubled the land carriage until August 1763, when the loss of the *Michigan* started a chain of events that brought the uprising to Niagara.

Two days after the *Michigan* left Buffalo Creek, New York, leaks and bad weather cast the ship onto the south shore of Lake Erie about fourteen miles from the Niagara River.⁶² In addition to vital supplies for the beleaguered Detroit garrison, the sloop carried an Indian peace delegation that included Daniel Oughnour, a Mohawk friend of Johnson's. With the help of army engineer John Montresor, a passenger on the *Michigan*, the shipwrecked crew erected a small defensive log breastwork and waited for help. Two companies from Fort Niagara arrived on September 2 to protect the small post. The peace delegation's presence there proved helpful when a small Indian band attacked the following day. Three men lay dead before Daniel had a chance to talk to the attackers.

⁶²Near present-day Highland-on-the-Lake, New York.

Though they would give him no information, he identified them as Senecas.⁶³ The presence of a prominent Mohawk delegation may have prevented further attacks, and this gave Major John Wilkins and his regiment encamped at Fort Niagara time to organize a salvage operation. This was done with some trepidation, because on September 7 Henry Bouquet sent word from Fort Pitt that a force of eight hundred Ohio Indians was headed to Niagara to attack the portage.⁶⁴ For days wagons and oxen rolled back and forth across the portage with no sign of trouble. Couagne wrote that from the time of the attack on the wreck until September 13, Indians allowed the wagon trains to “pass, and repass under an escort of 20, or 30 at most, with an Officer.” But the unseen Indians around the portage were actually waiting for the best opportunity to attack, and with British forces busy salvaging the wreck, they struck. “Melancholy was their fate,” reported Couagne, “For they were so massacred that 64 were buried yesterday.”⁶⁵ Couagne’s report was one of the first accounts of the Devil’s Hole attack, and unfortunately for the victims, the death toll he reported was low.

On September 14, 1763, a wagon train with a twenty-five-man military escort hurried northward across the portage toward the Lower Landing, having just unloaded provisions at Fort Schlosser. About three miles from their destination a large body of Indians attacked without warning, making enough noise to attract the attention of a

⁶³J. C. Webster, “Life of John Montresor” *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 3rd ser. 22 (May 1928): 14-18; Couagne to Johnson, Sept. 8, 1763, *WJP*, 10:812; Collin Andrews to Johnson, Sept. 9, 1763, *WJP*, 10:812-13.

⁶⁴Bouquet to Amherst, Sept. 7, 1763, *MPHC*, 19:230-31.

⁶⁵John Stoughton to Johnson, Sep. 16, 1763, *WJP*, 10:814; Couagne to Johnson, Sep. 16, 1763, *WJP*, 10:815.

military force in transit waiting at the Lower Landing fort.⁶⁶ There, Lts. William Fraser and George Campbell sent to Fort Niagara for help and hurried their two companies up the escarpment to aid the wagon train. At Niagara Major Wilkins quickly readied his regiment and hurried them to the Lower Landing post. But when they arrived, they learned that the worst had already happened: Campbell and Fraser had moved their companies into a trap. As the soldiers advanced toward the site of the attack on the portage path, they heard yelping behind them. Thinking that they had been outflanked, they retreated toward the edge of the steep bluff where the actual main force lay hidden. The attacking Indians had chosen the location well.

Directly above the whirlpool known as Devil's Hole, where a wooden bridge crossed a small creek emptying into the Niagara, the retreating companies had nowhere to run. Several soldiers plunged over the precipice, and many more were killed and scalped on the portage path. Wilkins waited with his men at the Lower Landing for reinforcements, but nightfall forced the regiment back to Fort Niagara. Next morning they returned to find most of the soldiers dead on the path. Eighty men died without inflicting a single casualty upon the attackers, making the Devil's Hole attack the worst British military loss in the Indian uprising.⁶⁷ And to make matters worse, the Indians had killed or stolen all the draft animals and hurled wagons and harnesses into the swirling

⁶⁶The size of the attacking force was disputed. Early reports put the Indian party at 400-500 men, but later a Seneca chief told Johnson that the attackers numbered 309.

⁶⁷Later reports asserted that one Indian attacker was wounded.

rapids. Without the draft teams and wagons, the portage was cut off, as were all of the posts on the Great Lakes, including besieged Fort Detroit.⁶⁸

Amherst and Johnson immediately set about repairing the damage and placing blame for the attack, and both found the latter easier than the former. Initially they supposed that the attacking force was the same one Bouquet had reported the previous month, meaning that some of the Indians had come from western groups. But all reports of the ambush identified Senecas among the attackers, and this was borne out by the discovery of tracks leading toward the Genesee castle. With the knowledge that Senecas had begun attacking the portage, fear set in at Niagara and throughout the West. Amherst warned Bouquet to watch out for deception, because the attackers stole dead soldiers' uniforms.⁶⁹ Wilkins's relief expedition bound for Detroit was delayed for the year by devastating storms on Lake Erie. Provisions for their winter camp at Fort Erie had to be brought across the portage on men's backs until fresh oxen and wagons arrived on September 25.⁷⁰ Johnson warned of worse tidings to come. He knew that the Genesees were involved, and feared that "The Success which they met with, may perhaps Encourage all the Senecas to Joyn them, and ... that Nation consists in the Whole of near 1000 Fighting Men."⁷¹

While Niagara braced for a major assault, the small attacks kept coming. On October 12, fifty Indians attacked the cattle guard at Fort Schlosser, killing and stealing

⁶⁸William Browning to Johnson, Sept. 17, 1763, *WJP*, 10:816; George Etherington to Johnson, Sep. 17, 1763, *WJP*, 10:817-18; Johnson to Lords of Trade, Sep. 25, 1763, *NYCD*, 7:559-62; Johnson to Amherst, Oct. 6, 1763, *WJP*, 10:866-70.

⁶⁹Amherst to Johnson, Oct. 1, 1763, *WJP*, 10:860-61; Amherst to Bouquet, Oct. 3, 1763, *MPHC* 19:237-38.

⁷⁰Thomas Moncrieffe to Johnson, Oct. 4, 1763, *WJP*, 4:212-13.

⁷¹Johnson to Amherst, Sep. 30, 1763, *WJP*, 4:209-11.

eleven of the sixteen oxen vital to the portage.⁷² Around the same time Indians killed a man who had lagged too far behind a portage wagon train. Four of Fort Niagara's flanking guards had also gone missing, all "without the Noise of a Gun," according to Couagne.⁷³ On November 5, Indians killed nine men foraging for firewood near the Lower Landing, beheading one of them within sight of the post.⁷⁴ Local Indians did not need to lay siege to Fort Niagara when attacking the portage itself inflicted fear and crippled British efforts to relieve the beleaguered upcountry posts.

Amherst believed that dealing quickly and harshly with the Genesee Senecas was the answer to Niagara's problems. In November he ordered Niagara's commander William Browning to plan the destruction of the Genesee castle itself. "It will Ensure an Uninterrupted Communication from Oswego to Niagara," he promised, "And probably hinder any further Attacks on the Carrying Place."⁷⁵ Amherst remained convinced that his plan to reduce the number of gifts given to Indians at the posts was sensible and just, despite growing suspicions that his restrictions were a major source of animosity among rebel Indians. He refused to consent to what he considered to be bribery as a means for ending the uprising.⁷⁶ By winter, goods were moving again on the portage, and Amherst urged Browning to stock supplies at Fort Schlosser so that a relief expedition could be sent to Detroit as quickly as possible in the spring.⁷⁷ But in November Amherst was

⁷²Browning to Johnson, Oct. 22, 1763, *WJP*, 10:906-07.

⁷³Couagne to Johnson, Oct. 17, 1763, *WJP*, 10:884.

⁷⁴Couagne to Johnson, Nov. 11, 1763, *WJP*, 10:921-22.

⁷⁵Amherst to Browning, Nov. 11, 1763, in Sir Frederick Haldimand: Unpublished Papers and Correspondence, 1758-84, microfilm (London: World Microfilm Publications, 1977), reel 8, section 21678, 29 (hereafter cited as Haldimand Papers).

⁷⁶Amherst to Johnson, Sept. 30, 1763, *NYCD*, 7:568-69.

⁷⁷Amherst to Browning, Sept. 29, 1763, Haldimand Papers, reel 8, section 21678, 34-36.

recalled to London, leaving the resolution of Niagara's problems to Johnson and the new commander-in-chief, Thomas Gage.

Even as Gage took over Amherst's command and began planning punitive measures against warring Indian groups, Genesee representatives began peace overtures. The rebellion was slowing in the West, and the French showed no signs of entering the conflict and retaking their lost North American territories. On December 15 three Genesee deputies and more than two hundred Indians from other Iroquois League nations met Johnson at his new home in the Mohawk Valley. The Genesees agreed to end hostilities against the British, blaming their involvement in the uprising on Delaware and Ottawa instigation. Johnson dismissed their arguments as "insignificant, & dissatisfactory" and warned that Gage would be unlikely to accept their offers of peace. Conoquieson, an Oneida representative, scolded the Genesees for endangering the Covenant Chain of peace between the Iroquois and the British. "Take Pity of your Children, and Families – consider also your Country, if you have any Regard for the same, and leave off[f] your silly Pride," he urged the Genesees, "I speak only to you of *Chenussio*,⁷⁸ as the rest of the Confederacy have nothing else in View but to keep up that Friendship with the English which has so long subsisted – do you the same, and perhaps you may live to have *white Heads*." The Genesee deputies thanked the Oneida speaker for the advice. "You have really *shook* us by the *Head* so often, that we have not a Hair left on it," the Genesee speaker joked, but with most of the Iroquois confederacy eager for peace and Gage ready to send a punitive force against them in the spring, the Genesees knew their rebellion must end soon. At the end of the conference Johnson

⁷⁸Genesee Senecas were called *Chenussios* in the eighteenth century, but the modern pronunciation "Genesee" is substituted throughout this chapter.

rewarded all the participants with currency except the Genesee deputies, telling them that their returning home empty-handed “was owing to their own Folly, and Wickedness.”⁷⁹

Under Gage, Johnson had greater latitude to formulate Indian policy. With the Genesees seeking peace he set out to convince Gage not to take too harsh a stand against the Senecas. Gage’s interpretation of the Senecas’ involvement in the uprising was purely geopolitical. He noted that western Senecas had attacked British trading parties before the uprising began, and they had been encouraging the western Indians to revolt since 1761 with the expectation that France would soon return to retake their possessions in North America. With no French aid in sight by the end of 1763, the Genesee Senecas had no choice but to seek peace. Gage thought that the Senecas, as supposed British allies, should be treated more harshly than belligerent Shawnees, Delawares, Chippewas, and Ottawas in negotiating peace terms.⁸⁰ Besides, Gage noticed that there were an unusual number of white men among the Genesees, and he suspected they were army deserters.⁸¹

Johnson’s interpretation was more sympathetic to the Senecas’ economic and practical problems. He argued that the Senecas were not instigators, but had been “drawn in as Auxilliaries” by other rebellious groups. This was possible because of their dissatisfaction with the differences between “the present & former possessors of Niagara” and “the loss they sustained at the carrying place where they used to earn a good deal by transporting the Traders & Western Inds goods.”⁸² He asked Gage to allow him to separate his negotiations with the Senecas from those with other Indians involved in the uprising, and suggested that the Genesee Senecas be induced once again to cede the

⁷⁹“Journal of Indian Congress,” *WJP*, 10:968-71.

⁸⁰Gage to Johnson, Jan. 12, 1764, *WJP*, 4:290-93.

⁸¹Gage to Johnson, Jan. 31, 1764, *WJP*, 4:314-15.

⁸²Johnson to Gage, Jan. 27, 1764, *WJP*, 4:308-10.

Niagara Carrying Place to the crown to prevent further attacks there.⁸³ Gage doubted that the Senecas would agree, but he believed the effort would be worth a try given the strategic value of the portage, which had never been plainer to British authorities than in the previous fall.

In March 1764, Genesee Seneca leaders met at Johnson Hall and gave Johnson exactly what he wanted, much to his surprise and delight. A delegation of British-allied Senecas from Kanadasego had subsequently visited the Genesees and elicited their agreement to cease hostilities and to reaffirm their adherence to the Covenant Chain.⁸⁴ The Seneca Nation agreed to deliver up two Indians accused of killing a trading party in 1762 along with all "Prisoners, Deserters, French men, and Negroes" who had taken refuge among them. They agreed to give free passage and assistance through their country to any British traders or military personnel, and promised not to communicate with any Indians warring against the British.

As for the portage, the Senecas ceded to the king full rights to a strip of land fourteen miles long and four miles wide on both sides of the river from Fort Niagara running south to Fort Schlosser, encompassing the entire carrying place. The Senecas agreed "never to obstruct the passage of the carrying place, or the free use of any part of the said tract," provided the ceded tract "be always appropriated to H. M's sole use," and subject to boundary lines drawn with Seneca witnesses present to avoid disputes. In return, Genesee Senecas who had participated in the uprising would receive a full pardon and be restored to full membership in the Covenant Chain alliance.⁸⁵ "The Chenussios &

⁸³Johnson to Lords of Trade, Jan. 20, 1764, *NYCD*, 7:599-602.

⁸⁴"An Indian Conference," *WJP*, 11:139-40.

⁸⁵"Articles of Peace Concluded With the Seneca Indians," *NYCD*, 7:621-23.

Enemy Senecas have been here several days," Johnson reported to Gage, "And after due consideration on the Articles of peace, have at length agreed to them beyond my Expectations."⁸⁶ Johnson had wrested title to the portage from the Senecas, but as he prepared for the main peace conference to be held at Niagara in June rumors and doubts still plagued the garrisons there.

Violence continued at Niagara throughout the spring despite Johnson's peace terms with the Senecas. On April 10, Browning reported that a soldier of the 80th regiment had been killed and scalped near the Lower Landing while out "to shoot an Eagle," and that Indians had been seen hiding near the portage road and harassing express carriers. Furthermore, Henry Gladwin sent word from Detroit that a large group of Indians, including Delawares and Senecas, planned an imminent attack on the portage.⁸⁷ Fears of a new Indian offensive against Detroit and the Niagara Carrying Place spread throughout the region. By the end of April, Johnson sought to dispel rumors that two thousand Indians were massing for such an offensive. "I have little reason to think the Senecas would at this time have attempted anything against us," he told Gage, theorizing that renegade Delawares, Chippewas, or Mississaugas camped near Niagara had killed the soldier, and he doubted that any Indian groups could amass and feed an army two-thousand strong. Still, Johnson thought it prudent to send a body of Senecas and "a few Whites" to Niagara to guard the portage.⁸⁸ Gage agreed that the report of a new Indian offensive was most likely a rumor or a war plan formulated before the Senecas approved

⁸⁶Johnson to Gage, Apr. 6, 1764, *WJP*, 4:389.

⁸⁷Browning to Johnson, Apr. 10, 1764, *WJP*, 11:124-25.

⁸⁸Johnson to Gage, Apr. 27, 1764, *WJP*, 11:163; Johnson to Colden, Apr. 28, 1764, *The Letters and Papers of Cadwallader Colden*, (New York: New York Historical Society, 1918-1937), 6:304-05.

the peace treaty.⁸⁹ Meanwhile in Albany, Col. John Bradstreet began organizing an expedition at Niagara to relieve the upcountry posts and to punish warring Indians, for which fortifying the portage became a vital priority.

John Montresor and a detachment of 550 men arrived at Fort Niagara on May 19 to begin building a series of redoubts along the portage road and to improve the defenses of smaller posts along the Niagara River. Montresor found morale to be low in the area, especially at Fort Niagara where he reported a "Discord in the Service" among the garrison and surrounding troops and thought that "disunion" and "dissension" were prevalent.⁹⁰ The engineer spent most of his time at the portage, where he lost no time in surveying the entire Carrying Place and the system of "cradles," rope-drawn winches and platforms installed to haul goods up the escarpment above the Lower Landing.⁹¹ Reinforced by 110 soldiers from the 46th regiment, Montresor's total command consisted of 656 men comprised of "Regulars Canadians Provincials, Indian Teamsters & Artificers." Their task was to guard the portage, build a series of redoubts along the portage road, and keep the wagon trains moving.⁹² With this large force in place, traffic on the portage began to increase; by June 4 provisions moved through the passage without escorts. A few days later, Montresor's men had finished their ten redoubts and began palisading and arming the small posts, improving the portage road, and cutting

⁸⁹Gage to Johnson, Apr. 25, 1764, *WJP*, 4:408-09.

⁹⁰"The Journals of Captain John Montresor," ed. G. D. Scull, in *Collections of the New York Historical Society*, 14:262 (hereafter cited as "Montresor's Journals").

⁹¹Montresor is often credited as the cradles' builder, an attribution that is probably false. The apparatus was already in use when Montresor arrived at Niagara, and though his journal entries imply that he had heard about them, he expressed doubt that they would "answer the purpose intended." "Montresor's Journals," 14:258; Dunnigan, "Portaging Niagara," 217-18; McConnell, *Army and Empire*, 16-17.

⁹²"Montresor's Journals," 14:259.

back the woods 150 yards on both sides of the path. By the end of the month, oxen and wagons carried hundred of barrels of goods per day across the route.

Indians sent to guard the portage maintained a constant presence there during Montresor's efforts, though not always to the engineer's benefit. Montresor used his assemblage of one hundred Indians to reconnoiter and secure the surrounding woods, and Indian disinterest in their mission or outright hostility to the fortification effort diminished their effectiveness as guards. On June 8 native guards pursued three "enemy Indians" sighted near the portage but did not catch them. The situation became tenser the following day when thirty Indians arrived to reinforce Montresor's detachment. Upon approaching Fort Schlosser, the fresh arrivals fired off their guns in salute, which panicked and dispersed the encamped Indian detachment. Fort Schlosser's garrison mistook the newly arrived Indians for enemies and fired on them, eventually shooting three of them in the legs.⁹³

The mistake caused anger and grumbling among the encamped Indians that diminished their effectiveness as portage guards. On June 22 "Alleghany Indians" killed an artilleryman, leaving a hatchet in his skull. Indians from the portage encampment gave chase but once again failed to catch the assailants.⁹⁴ With most of the portage work complete in early July, Montresor fretted that his Indian detachment had not yet removed their camp, and remained "as indolent and inactive as ever."⁹⁵ Indians employed on the portage during Montresor's 'improvements' probably provided an important deterrent to attacks by virtue of their presence alone, but their efforts as guards seem to have been

⁹³Ibid., 14: 261-62; Johnson to Gage, June 29, 1764, *WJP*, 11:245-46.

⁹⁴"Montresor's Journals," 14:265.

⁹⁵Ibid., 14:268.

half-hearted. The new redoubts made the Carrying Place an armed British outpost at a vital spot in the heart of Indian country. Indians witnessing the transformation could not have been pleased.

While Montresor and his men labored to secure and improve the portage and Bradstreet planned his expedition to retake and relieve the Great Lakes posts, Johnson prepared for his Niagara peace conference. Johnson chose Niagara because it was centrally located for Six Nations, Canadian, and western Indians, and because it lay outside the country of the most belligerent groups in the western Great Lakes.⁹⁶ Of course, Niagara sat within the country of the crown's other enemies in the uprising, the Genesee Senecas, but this also served Johnson's plan to treat with the Senecas and the Great Lakes groups separately in order to drive a wedge between them and to prevent further collusion between natives of the two regions.⁹⁷ Indians throughout the Great Lakes had suffered for want of essential trade goods after the siege of Detroit and the fall of Michilimackinac and other trading posts the previous year. Johnson hoped to elicit promises of friendship from western Indians already friendly to the British and eager for a renewal of trade. He also hoped to quell hostile groups through the threat of military force and the inducement of trade renewal. Finally, he hoped to gain Indian assistance for the punitive and relief expeditions to be led by Bradstreet and Bouquet late in the summer. Johnson was optimistic about the diplomatic possibilities for the conference, but others remained skeptical. Bradstreet thought that Indians would come to Niagara "more for the sake of the goods they are to receive and to watch our Motions than any real

⁹⁶Johnson to Gage, Jan. 27, 1764, *WJP*, 4:308-10.

⁹⁷Johnson to Lords of Trade, May 11, 1764, *NYCD*, 7:624-26.

service they intend us.”⁹⁸ Indeed, Johnson intended to reward Indian attendees handsomely; a budget of £25,000 New York currency would be approved for Indian provisions at the conference.⁹⁹ News of the general conference must have seemed a godsend to Indians desperate for trade and exhausted by war.

Johnson arrived at Niagara on June 9 to find that several groups of friendly Chippewas, Ottawas, and others from the western Great Lakes had been filtering in since May. Most of those delegations followed a similar three-part appeal with Johnson. First, they would remind Johnson of their friendship with the British and the help they had provided in the past. For example, Ottawas of L’Arbre Croche reminded Johnson that they had saved the survivors of the Michilimackinac assault the year before. Some groups offered the services of some of their young men to aid in Bradstreet’s expedition. Second, they insisted that they had played no part in or possessed any knowledge of the uprising or any attacks on forts. For example, Bindanowan, an Ottawa chief, told Johnson that he had no advance knowledge of the attack on Michilimackinac because he lived near Montreal, and “only heard a little bird Whistle an Acct of it & on going to Michilimackinac I found your people killed.” And third, the groups professed their great poverty and asked for provisions and permission to trade for ammunition, trade goods, and especially rum.¹⁰⁰

Johnson had come to Niagara prepared to reward hostile Indians who agreed to suspend violence, and was even happier to offer goods and trade to England’s friends. He insisted that these groups make it clear to hostile nations that trade would only ensue

⁹⁸Bradstreet to Gage, June 4, 1764, Gage Papers AS, vol. 19.

⁹⁹“Montresor’s Journals,” 14: 275.

¹⁰⁰“Conference With Indians,” *WJP*, 11:262-73; “An Indian Congress,” *WJP*, 11:273-89.

once the violence ceased. Johnson asked most groups if they knew who had instigated the war, but all of them claimed ignorance. Not until July 17 would Johnson meet with actual belligerents, a group of Hurons from the Detroit area who claimed that the Ottawas forced them to rebel. So far, Bradstreet's suspicions had been partially justified: Most Indians saw the Niagara Conference as a trading rendezvous. Once there they told Johnson what he wished to hear and either through ignorance or dissemblance gave the superintendent little actual war intelligence.

Indians at the conference took full advantage of opportunities for trade and recreation, and an abundant supply of rum helped lubricate the latter. Before the conference Johnson wondered if it should be sold at all at Niagara. "I plainly See that they will not be satisfied without it," he admitted to Gage, and knew that the Indians would "when assembled at Niagara ask for, & make a point of it." Gage agreed that it should be provided. "We must at length yield to the immoderate Thirst which the Indians have for Rum," Gage wrote, though the sale of alcohol would continue to be controversial throughout the colonial period.¹⁰¹ At Niagara, Indians deprived of rum during the uprising were happy to find a generous supply in store. Conference visitors could purchase a gallon of rum for one beaver skin, half the price of a stroud blanket or a calico-lined bed gown.¹⁰² Montresor complained of several episodes of Indian drunkenness during his tenure at the portage, from his arrival in May, when a group of Chippewas and Mohawks left Fort Niagara for the portage "almost all Drunk," to June 13, when intoxicated Indians in the portage encampment threatened to kill army captain

¹⁰¹ Johnson to Gage, May 11, 1764, *WJP*, 11:189-90; Gage to Johnson, May 28, 1764, *WJP*, 4:432-33.

¹⁰² "Equivalents in Barter," *WJP*, 4:490-91.

Andrew Montour. On July 17 Montresor reported that the 1,200 Indians attending the conference were being given "Rum and Oxen" to "regale with."¹⁰³

Liquor caused even more problems for trader Alexander Henry. He arrived on July 10 in command of a 96-man "Indian battalion" from the Lake Erie region, which he ordered to Fort Schlosser to join Bradstreet's expedition. After visiting Fort Niagara, most of them left immediately for home, and the fourteen who stayed went on to Fort Erie and drank until Bradstreet cut off their liquor. Then they went home too, leaving an embarrassed Henry without his battalion.¹⁰⁴ In addition to any serious diplomatic motives, and to the occasional detriment of British plans, Indians intended to enjoy themselves at the Niagara Conference.

Although most attendees were already friendly to the British and treated the conference as a trade jamboree, Johnson was still able to make his points. His main diplomatic thrust concerned the resumption of trade. "What you suffer by this prohibition," Johnson told a group of friendly Ottawas from Michilimackinac eager for trade, "Should convince you of the ill consequences of Quarreling with the English who Command all the Doors into your Country & without whose Consent you can receive no Supplys."¹⁰⁵ Johnson made it clear that those loyal to the British must make every effort to curtail other Indians' belligerence. "Soon as that is done," he told the Ottawa headman Bildanowan, "Trade will immediately flourish, & not before."¹⁰⁶

This was a powerful inducement, as many Indians had been driven to near poverty by lack of trade. An Ottawa chief speaking for several nations linked their denials of

¹⁰³"Montresor's Journals," 14:259, 263, 272.

¹⁰⁴Henry, *Travels and Adventures*, 182-84.

¹⁰⁵"Conference With Indians," *WJP*, 11:269.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*, 266.

involvement with requests for aid. "We have not yet lost our Senses, but retain them as we did, when we were a numerous People," he told Johnson, "But we are in a great Poverty." Speaking for a group of Toronto Chippewas, the chief claimed that they had been reduced to poverty "through the means of those Indians who became drunk: they therefore beg you will Indulge them with a fair Trade."¹⁰⁷ Johnson always made it clear that Indians needed to choose between the British and the rebellious groups. "They are your Enemies, as well as ours," he told a large assembly, "They are the Occasion of your being so poor."¹⁰⁸ With friendly Western and Six Nations Indians dominating the conference, Johnson used promises of England's economic power to convince allies and enemies alike that the best way to maintain a balanced, reciprocal trade and diplomatic settlement was with peace. But Pontiac and other enemy leaders did not show up at Johnson's conference, and by July 23 neither had the Genesee Senecas. A peace arrangement with at least one of the major hostile groups was necessary for the conference to be called a success.

Amidst the general commotion caused by a major Indian conference and the muster and organization of Bradstreet's large invasion force, the absence of the region's masters, the Genesee Senecas, must have added great tension for soldiers and Indians alike. The Genesees had not yet complied with their treaty obligations. They had not delivered up all the prisoners, British deserters, and slaves demanded by Johnson. To make matters worse for the British, a band of enemy Delawares had taken refuge near the Genesee castle, despite Genesee promises to join the British in opposing rebellious

¹⁰⁷Indians at the conference frequently referred to rebellious groups as being "drunk," meaning that they had lost their good sense. "An Indian Congress," *WJP*, 11:284-85.

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*, 286.

Delaware and Shawnee groups.¹⁰⁹ And to Johnson's frustration, Genesee representatives had neither arrived at the conference on time nor sent messengers to explain their absence. Attendees began to ask nervously what Johnson would do about the tardy Senecas. On July 20 he told a group of Ottawas that the Genesees did not seem to be sincere in keeping the promises they had made to him in April, and that if they did not appear within a couple of days and fulfill their requirements, Johnson would "do himself Justice."¹¹⁰ But the Genesees had a perfectly good reason to delay their arrival, though Johnson did not know it at the time: A rumor had spread that Johnson had given up on bringing them to British submission and would order them killed when he had the chance.¹¹¹ Without a conclusion to the Seneca peace treaty the portage would not be secure, and the Bradstreet's military expedition would leave behind a threatened Niagara.

Much to Johnson's (and everyone else's) relief, the Genesee messengers arrived on July 23 and agreed to hold a general meeting the next day. Johnson rebuked them for breaching their treaty obligations and keeping him waiting so long at the conference.¹¹² At the meeting the following day Johnson lost no time in bringing up his latest sore point. "I little expected you would have been capable of Acting so bad a Part," he scolded the Seneca delegation, "As to give shelter to the Enemy Delawares, after the Promises made by your People last Spring."¹¹³ He also noted that they brought only four prisoners from Genesee. Johnson told them that they must deliver up the Delaware ringleaders within thirty days and leave two of their chiefs as hostages. "We can reduce you to Beggary

¹⁰⁹Browning to Johnson, May 23, 1764, *WJP*, 11:196; "Journal of Indian Affairs," *WJP*, 11: 236.

¹¹⁰"An Indian Congress," *WJP*, 11:288.

¹¹¹Johnson to Gage, Aug. 5, 1764, *WJP*, 11:325.

¹¹²"An Indian Congress," *WJP*, 11:290.

¹¹³*Ibid.*, 291.

without fighting,” Johnson reminded them, “by only Debarring you of Trade... If you deceive us any more, or continue Obstinate, your Ruin is inevitable.”¹¹⁴ A Genesee chief, Tohaditkarawa, answered that their whole party had not yet arrived with the rest of the prisoners, and they were prepared to comply with the April treaty. “We Chenussios acknowledge our selves to be great Transgressors,” the chief admitted, but promised to provide young men to fight in the West. They also promised to finalize their cession of the land around the Carrying Place. However, they regretted not being able to supply the two “murderers” of the trading party as stipulated in the treaty, because one had died recently and the other fled upon hearing he was to be given up. The Genesees hoped their failure to supply the suspects would not be considered a breach of the treaty. “We are not Masters over the Lives of our People,” the Seneca chief reminded Johnson, who knew well how local Indian politics worked.¹¹⁵

Johnson was determined to finalize the Seneca treaty, and over the next few days repeated his demands to the full Genesee delegation. On August 5 the Genesees agreed to send for the Delaware leaders Squash Cutter and Attyatawitsera and deliver them to Johnson, and handed over a total of thirteen prisoners and one British deserter. They also provided Bradstreet with twenty-three young men for his expedition. “The most of our People being drunk ever since they came here, we are not yet able to collect any more,” the Genesee speaker apologized, but promised to supply more as soon as his people sobered up.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴Ibid., 293.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 297.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 316.

Johnson's only alteration of the original deal, aside from the requirement to deliver over the Delaware leaders, was an augmentation to the land cession. "I would further recommend it to you to give a higher Proof of your friendship," Johnson insisted, "that you should cede to his Majesty the Lands from above your late Gift, to the *Rapids* at Lake Erie on both sides of the Streights, in Breadth as the former, and to include all the Islands."¹¹⁷ With this new cession, England would have the entire Niagara Strait from Fort Niagara to Fort Erie, four miles in breadth on both sides, "for (the King's) sole use, and that of his Garrisons, but not as private property."¹¹⁸ The Senecas agreed to the new land cession, though they insisted on designating the islands in the Niagara River as a present for Johnson. "We have for some time had it in view to give them to you as a small Reward for your great trouble, and Care of us," the Senecas told Johnson, eager to prevent British-Seneca hostilities.¹¹⁹ The final treaty, signed by seven Genesee sachems, gave Johnson assurance of a safe British portage protected by Seneca neighbors.

Despite his lofty goals of Western pacification, Johnson's main accomplishment at the Niagara conference was in laying groundwork for the British subjugation of Niagara itself. He did not know the Genesees' intentions toward the British until the very end, and Bradstreet's expedition to the western Great Lakes was held hostage to this uncertainty. Johnson admitted this to Gage at the conference's conclusion:

I could not say anything positive till the Arrival of the Enemy Senecas, particularly the Chenussios who did not arrive until the 2nd ... this greatly Alarmed us, & it was Coll. Bradstreets & my opinion that the Fort and Carrying

¹¹⁷Ibid., 319.

¹¹⁸"Articles of Peace Between Sir William Johnson and the Genesee Indians," *NYCD*, 7:652-53.

¹¹⁹"An Indian Congress," *WJP*, 11:321-22. Johnson accepted the islands for diplomatic reasons, but never intended to keep them for himself. He turned them over to the crown along with the other ceded territory.

Place would be greatly exposed Should the Troops proceed before they came & had settled Matters, as they could muster immediately above 400 Men of their own, & would undoubtedly be supported by the 100 Delawares who took refuge amongst them ... we could not be positive but many of ye Western Indians here might be tempted to Join them.¹²⁰

For their part, the more than two thousand western Indians who attended the conference did well for themselves. They were rewarded for their past friendship, allowed to trade at Fort Niagara, and charged only with encouraging warring Indians to put down the hatchet. In the end, the conference was more about the security of the Niagara passage and resumption of trade in the West than it was a harsh subjugation of Indians participating in Pontiac's Rebellion. Pressured by Johnson's economic coaxing and the warnings of other Six Nations groups, Genesee Senecas seemed to have given up control of the most strategically important land carriage on the Great Lakes to the sole remaining European superpower in eastern North America. For Johnson the treaty with the Senecas was the capstone of his diplomatic efforts in 1764, and residents of the Niagara forts looked forward to peace. But at the end of this turbulent year at Niagara, much remained unresolved.

Johnson was optimistic about the future of the portage when he wrote the Lords of Trade on August 30 to crow about his success at Niagara. "The cession made by the Senecas is very considerable, and will, I hope, put a stop to all future disputes about the carrying place," he wrote, noting that the Senecas "have been great losers by us concerning it." Johnson explained that when the French possessed Niagara the Senecas enjoyed the sole carrying concession on the portage, but under the English regime oxen

¹²⁰Johnson to Gage, Aug. 5, 1764, *WJP*, 11:324-25.

and wagons had replaced the Indian carriers.¹²¹ Gage and Johnson briefly discussed returning this concession to the Genesees to retain their cooperation, since it would mean little to the king who carried goods across the portage, and would mean much to the Senecas because of their former employment there.¹²² Senecas no longer lived near the portage, but still resorted to Fort Niagara from long practice. In February 1764 a group of Senecas visited Niagara and tested the friendship of John Vaughan, the fort's new commander. He gave them some provisions, and though the group left in good spirits, the encounter worried Vaughan. Johnson reminded him that Senecas had little reason to love the English after losing the gifts and favors they enjoyed under the French.¹²³

Keeping Senecas happy was not the only rationale for renewing their carrying concession. British carriers had been a source of frustration for the army and traders throughout 1765. The civilian portage master, John Stedman, was not in the army's good graces in 1765; in fact, Bradstreet caught him overcharging the crown and replaced him briefly.¹²⁴ Gage did not trust any of the "waggon men," and he warned Vaughan that they would leave military stores to rot if a trader paid them more to bring his trade goods across.¹²⁵ At the end of 1765, Gage still considered the possibility of a Seneca carrying

¹²¹Johnson to the Lords of Trade, Aug. 30, 1764, *NYCD*, 7:647-48.

¹²²Gage to Johnson, Sep. 25, 1764, Gage Papers AS, vol. 24; Johnson to Gage, Sep. 30, 1764, *WJP*, 11:365.

¹²³Vaughan to Johnson, Feb. 28, 1765, *WJP*, 11:612-13; Johnson to Vaughan, Apr. 18, 1765, *WJP*, 11:701.

¹²⁴Bradstreet to Gage, Apr. 7, 1765, Gage Papers AS, vol. 33; Gage to Bradstreet, Apr. 15, 1765, Gage Papers AS, vol. 34.

¹²⁵Gage to Vaughan, Apr. 18, 1765, Gage Papers AS, vol. 34.

concession at Niagara.¹²⁶ But economic and military necessity had come to dictate events at the portage, and keeping wagons and goods moving overruled Indian diplomacy.

Senecas would never work at the portage again. While Gage and Johnson considered restoring Indian carriers, Stedman and his military partner Lt. Francis Pfister had already established themselves among traders as the sole portage masters. Rather than shake up the system, Gage awarded Pfister and Stedman the concession in March 1766, and allowed Pfister to set up shop at Fort Schlosser. This would entail Pfister's planting corn and keeping cattle at the fort, which worried Johnson just as much as when Amherst had proposed the same arrangement four years earlier.¹²⁷ Indians always objected to "the Establishment of familys, which they know will encrease (when once a beginning is made)," he wrote to Gage, and he agreed to talk to the Senecas before they interpreted the expanded settlement as an insult. The 1764 treaties only allowed British use of the Niagara strip for the crown's business, and under the agreement private settlement was strictly forbidden. But the portage trade had become lucrative for Gage's British contractors, and their successful enterprise at the portage ensured that Senecas would never again work the carrying trade at Niagara, and that ever more Europeans would begin to move into the region to stay.¹²⁸

With their role as masters of the Niagara region diminishing each year, Senecas began to act out their frustration. In July 1767 Gage asked Niagara's commander John

¹²⁶Gage to Johnson, Nov. 24, 1765, *WJP*, 4:878-79; Johnson to Gage, Dec. 21, 1765, *WJP*, 11:983.

¹²⁷Gage to Johnson, Mar. 17, 1766, *WJP*, 12:44.

¹²⁸Dunnigan, "Portaging Niagara," 219-21.

Brown to talk to the Senecas about “the Mischief they do upon the Carrying Place.”¹²⁹

Senecas had been stealing animals, and commissary Norman McLeod met with Castesh and other Seneca chiefs in August to sort the matter out. The chiefs agreed to scold their “young men” for taking cattle on the portage and promised to return any stolen animals they had in their villages. But Castesh reminded McLeod that there were “bad men every where,” and apart from “advising” the thieves not to steal, there was little they could do. As if to prove the chief’s point, on August 25 Senecas stole five pigs and a bullock on the portage. One of the Seneca speakers, Tacudese, left Fort Niagara on September 17 with one of Couagne’s horses. When Castesh left the council, he stole and killed a bullock himself. Senecas based their relationships on reciprocity, and if they were to be kicked out of Niagara, they would take whatever compensation they could find.¹³⁰

Over the years the importance of the carrying trade to the Genesee Senecas became overstated, and Indians operating the portage under the French regime became conflated with the entire Genesee group. For example, in 1777 Indian agent Daniel Claus exaggerated that the Genesees’ benefits at the Carrying Place “were so lucrative & considerable to that Nation, that in a short time they enriched themselves thereby.” But after the British took over the portage in 1759, the Genesees, whom Claus claimed had “for many years entirely depended upon that for their support,” had been reduced to severe poverty. Claus implied also that the attack at Devil’s Hole was due to the

¹²⁹Gage to John Brown, July 28, 1764, Haldimand Papers, reel 8, section 21678, 89.

¹³⁰“Journal of Indian Transactions at Niagara in the Year 1767,” in *The Documentary History of the State of New York*, ed. E. B. O’ Callaghan (Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons, 1849-1851), 2:871-80 (hereafter cited as *DHNY*); Brown to Johnson, Oct. 26, 1767, *WJP*, 5:759.

Genesees' "not easily forgetting injuries," and their continued ill-will against their English usurpers.¹³¹

Rethinking the Senecas' participation in the Indian rebellion as a simple labor dispute or grudge attack by embittered former portage workers may have helped soothe British remorse about Indian displacement in the Niagara region. But there is scant evidence about who actually participated in the Devil's Hole ambush, except that "Chenussios" were largely responsible. Most Genesees lived sixty miles from Niagara, and it is unknown if any of the attackers had ever worked at the portage. Indeed, after the 1759 siege, there is no mention of Indians living on the portage at all, except on a temporary basis during military operations, such as Bradstreet's expedition or Montresor's construction efforts. Johnson himself noted that the Genesees never stipulated any interest in the carrying concession during their 1764 talks.¹³² Wage labor at the portage was undoubtedly important to those Indians who performed the work under the French regime, and it established visibly the Seneca's occupation of Niagara while it lasted, but it was not the cause of the Senecas' rebellion against the British.

From the summer of 1763 to the fall of 1764, Genesee Senecas used familiar methods to preserve a solid footing in the face of increasing European expansion. They had always occupied a middle position between the French in Canada and the English in New York. But after the British triumph in the Seven Years' War, they foresaw a new economic and political climate where the price of goods could rise without possibility of redress and their hunting lands might be subject to white settlement. Some of them took action immediately after the British victory in 1761 by unsuccessfully trying to stir up

¹³¹Daniel Claus to Alexander Knox, Mar. 1, 1777, *NYCD*, 7:702-03.

¹³²Johnson to Gage, Dec. 21, 1765, *WJP*, 11:983.

rebellion in the West. More of them actually turned to violence to achieve their ends during the Indian uprising of 1763. When the Devil's Hole attack actually worsened their lot by ensuring the fortification of the important Niagara portage, Genesee Senecas turned away from violence and returned to the tactics of the early eighteenth century. They gave away a strip of land that had already been given away in 1701 and 1726, and with almost the same terms as before. As long as they could use the lands to hunt and fish, they risked nothing. And agreeing to Johnson's terms ensured that none of their people would be punished for the Devil's Hole attack, the worst loss to British arms in the entire Indian uprising. But the situation had changed in the thirty-eight years since the last cession of the Niagara corridor. In 1764, British military authorities and traders had the economic and demographic means to begin settling the Niagara region, and over subsequent years their alliances with Iroquois groups would mean less and less to their plans. Contrary to Seneca expectations, and unlike their two earlier deeds, the treaty of 1764 would eventually turn out to be a true land cession.

When the Senecas lost Niagara, they lost much more than wages. Senecas had controlled the Niagara region since the 1650s. Their hunting grounds and plantations were there, and for decades they fought against encroachment, restricting the construction of both French and British forts as long as they could. Only long after their attachment to and dependence on the European trade did the Senecas allow a fort at Niagara, and even that was disguised initially as a trading post. Fort Niagara, the portage, and Indian wage labor were all manifestations of the European fur trade, and they all worked toward the same ultimate, if sometimes unconscious, goal: remaking Indian country for the Europeans' benefit. Indians caught in the fur trade economy made the best of it, and that

sometimes included performing manual labor for wages, a livelihood that seldom “enriched” anyone despite what Daniel Claus and others may have thought. Senecas and other Indians involved in the Indian uprising acted from economic motives in seeking redress for perceived trade and gift-giving improprieties. Genesee Senecas acted strategically when they attacked the portage to prevent the British from relieving Detroit. But Senecas and other Indians in the rebellion also fought against European encroachment and change to protect Indian country, where council fires had been lit and ancestors buried for generations. The year that stretched from the summer of 1763 to the summer of 1764 showed Genesee Senecas attempting to maintain more than a few jobs carrying packs around a waterfall. They attacked at Niagara to defend their territory, and when the rebellion failed they agreed to a treaty that they thought would preserve their rights to live and hunt on their traditional lands at the cost of a permanent British presence. Neither they nor their new British landlord-tenants knew the full extent to which events were already moving out of their control.

CHAPTER FIVE

LIKE STARS THAT FALL:
Keeping Up Appearances at Fort Chartres, 1765-1772

In June 1772, a small company of British regular soldiers, newly arrived in the Illinois country, ascertained the depth of British authority in Kaskaskia. Fifteen miles away, Fort Chartres, the seat of British operations in Illinois for seven years, crumbled into the encroaching Mississippi. Thomas Gage had ordered the post's commandant, Major Isaac Hamilton, to abandon and destroy the fort. He also instructed Hamilton to send fifty men to guard Kaskaskia, the largest trading town in the area. Soon after the soldiers' arrival, a small band of visiting Chickasaws entered William Murray's trading house and ransacked it. According to Hugh Lord, the British detachment's captain, the fifteen Chickasaws entered the house, beat Murray's servants, and broke everything in the shop. They seemed bent more on intimidation or revenge than theft. Lord sent an officer and some men to turn out the invaders and guard the house until the Indians left. The soldiers took one prisoner, a man Lord described as a renegade Chickasaw living in Illinois who had "always used his utmost endeavours to breach the peace that has so long subsisted between the English and the Chickasaws." When the soldiers reached their guardhouse, they heard gunfire. The remaining Chickasaws had begun firing on the trader's house, killing one of Murray's servants. When Lord sent his men back to drive off the attackers, the Indians fired at the soldiers and fled, losing two of their number in the exchange. Lord and his soldiers might have expected more respect and cooperation,

but this native *charivari* showed that seven years of British occupation had done little to impress or intimidate Indians in the Illinois country.¹

At the conclusion of the Seven Years' War, Britain needed badly to make good impressions in their newly won territories. This would be especially difficult in Illinois, where supply and communication lines stretched for hundreds, even thousands, of miles.² But Britain had won control of Illinois by treaty and sought to establish its sovereignty. France had operated a colony in Illinois for decades, and Britain had to show that they could perform as well as their erstwhile enemies. This would entail finding a way to garrison Fort Chartres, the seat of French power in the region, and the westernmost of all posts ceded to the British.

Fort Chartres was intended to become a physical manifestation of British ambitions in the American interior. Unfortunately for British planners, Indians in the Great Lakes area were not cooperative. The Indian uprising of 1763-1764 delayed plans for the occupation of Illinois. Even after the uprising ended, belligerent activities continued in Illinois, ensuring that British garrisons would encounter resentful, confrontational Indian populations during their occupation attempt. British personnel at Fort Chartres would need to appear fully capable of meeting the region's Indians on British terms. The British mission in Illinois must look as strong and sound as the fort itself. For the unfortunate men destined to carry out this mission, this appearance of strength would prove elusive. Forts and military initiatives may have proven effective in

¹Lord to Gage, June 10, 1772, Gage Papers AS, vol. 111; Gage to Johnson, Sep. 7, 1772, *WJP*, 8:593.

²The quickest way *out* of Illinois was down the Mississippi River, and then by ship back to the eastern colonies. The fastest way *in* for British travelers was down the Ohio River. Both ways were time-consuming and dangerous.

some other parts of America, but in Illinois during the 1760s and early 1770s, Indians remained dominant and unimpressed by the British attempt to master Illinois.

Despite the appearance of confrontation conveyed by operating forts and garrisons deep within Indian country, few British military leaders ever suggested that the presence of manned posts alone could intimidate or overawe natives. Dependence on European trade could bind Indians to British interests better than force of arms. At any rate, military intimidation was impractical in remote regions like Illinois, where British units could not be relieved or provisioned easily in the event of an attack. Indians in Illinois knew that relatively small British garrisons manning regional outposts could never hold off a general native offensive, especially after so many frontier forts fell during the Indian uprising of 1763-64. But military units still needed to show Indians that they could punish renegade bands of attackers, maintain law and order, and protect settlers and traders from small-scale attacks. Fort commandants met with local and visiting Indians almost daily and every meeting was a new test of strength. From the Indian perspective, these meetings were negotiations of friendship, alliance, and promises of future aid. Commandants needed, at least, to manifest the appearance of power and potential violence in order to negotiate from a position of strength.

Even if the appearance of strength could not be maintained, garrisons and their commanders could never afford to look foolish or incompetent. They had to show that they could live, work, and accomplish their goals in Indian country as well as natives could. Susceptibility to disease or other environmental hazards would make newcomers appear weak to better-acclimated Indians. Forts needed to seem sturdy enough to withstand at least a small attack. Eastern Woodland Indians infused their war culture with

rituals and dress that would bring them spiritual power and human respect, and they would be quick to notice if British soldiers did not maintain their own regalia. And basic proofs of manhood mattered to Indians as well. Soldiers were expected to be able to fight and operate in the wild. If men could not hunt, fish, and gather fuel well enough to survive in an environment that provided all these things in abundance, then Indians were unlikely to take them very seriously.³

Penalties for appearing unprepared or foolish in Indians' eyes varied. After the bloody examples of the Seven Years' War and the Indian uprising, Indians knew that forts could be attacked and reduced easily. But a demolished outpost was of little use to anyone. A functioning outpost, on the other hand, could maintain the flow of European goods and provisions to Indians by protecting trade and supplying presents. The latter was preferable to Indians, who saw gift-giving as a cementing of reciprocal Indian-

³On Eastern Woodland war rituals and their relationship to power, see Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, 9-16. First impressions were particularly important among Indians and played a vital role in determining how well Indian-European endeavors would play out. Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 72-73. Among Illinois Indians, prowess in war was a fundamental facet of leadership, and the Illinois set the bar for success high. A successful war leader overcame his enemies without any losses to his own party, and two raids with losses could make a war chief lose his status. Charles Callender, "Illinois," in Trigger, *Handbook*, 676. Manliness and gender roles permeated native relations with Europeans. This is most noticeable in their use of gender-flavored language and metaphors in formal interactions and diplomacy. See Nancy Shoemaker, "An Alliance Between Men: Gender Metaphors in Eighteenth-Century American Indian Diplomacy East of the Mississippi," *Ethnohistory* 46:2 (Spring 1999): 239-63, especially 246-48 for Indian and European associations of war skills and masculinity. During the eighteenth century, the "masculine" warrior role was elevated in importance in some native societies, to the detriment of traditional Indian gender identifications. This was energized by European needs for Indian aid in war and the fur trade. See Claudio Saunt, "'Domestick ... Quiet being Broke': Gender Conflict Among Creek Indians in the Eighteenth Century," in Cayton and Teute, *Contact Points*, 151-74. For a full discussion of Indian-white competition and interaction between backcountry travelers, and the roles played by manliness and mutual understandings of gender identifications in intercultural contestation, see Levy, *Fellow Travelers*, 105-33.

European friendship. Gifts were the physical component of friendship between individuals, groups, and even nations. Indians expected them when performing the rites and responsibilities of friendship, and felt abused and slighted when gifts were not forthcoming. Presents of food, weapons, ammunition, and clothing were also necessities that Indians came to depend upon. In regions such as Illinois, where Europeans lived at the mercy of potentially hostile natives and an uncompromising environment, the importance of alliances with friendly Indians meant ever more opportunities for presents. A particularly feeble European presence mandated a greater need to placate Indian allies. Soldiers and forts that failed to impress Indians would have to pay well to maintain their love and friendship.⁴

Looking foolish cannot have been high on the list of concerns for Britons contemplating the occupation of Fort Chartres in 1764. Chartres was the remotest of all French outposts won in the Seven Years' War, but was also one of the strongest and most impressive. Built during the 1750s to counter the growing British threat to New Orleans and the Mississippi interior, Fort Chartres was a limestone giant that would have looked impressive anywhere in North America. Earlier forts at this site, near the Mississippi River about a hundred miles above the confluence of the Ohio, were substantial wooden

⁴For Indian concepts of reciprocity, gift-giving and Indian-white exchanges as contests of power, see David Murray, *Indian Giving*, 15-47. Richard White argues that presents were not bribery, but instead represented to Indians "the visible evidence of love, devotion, and good faith." *The Middle Ground*, 112-19; 380.

structures that failed to withstand the wet environment of the Mississippi sloughs.⁵ In 1751, French authorities began construction of a new stone fort, designed by noted engineer François Saucier in the popular European Vauban style.⁶ Compared to other French posts in the Illinois country, such as those at Kaskaskia and St. Louis, Fort Chartres was huge. Its sides measured 490 feet each, with walls 18 feet tall and more than 2 feet thick. The interior encompassed almost four acres and several buildings, most built of stone two stories high. Fort Chartres usually held garrisons of at least 150 men and was defended by at least 20 cannon.⁷ As a defensive outpost, Fort Chartres must have seemed nearly impenetrable to the region's Indians, most of whom had probably never seen a stone fort.

But for all its impressiveness, Fort Chartres was not built with intimidation in mind. The fort's stone construction was a response to the environmental hazards of the Mississippi Valley region, where wooden forts could not expect to last more than a couple of decades in the humid, frequently flooded lowlands. Its effectiveness as a defensive outpost was never tested by British or Indian attack during the Seven Years'

⁵For descriptions of the two earlier wooden French forts, also named Chartres, see Jane F. Babson, "The Architecture of Early Illinois Forts," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 61 (1968): 17-22, and David Keene, "Fort de Chartres: Archaeology in the Illinois Country," in *French Colonial Archaeology: The Illinois Country and the Western Great Lakes*, ed. John A. Walthall (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 30-31.

⁶Saucier was a draftsman in great demand in Louisiana and Illinois, and at the time of his appointment to design Fort de Chartres he was busy planning improvements to the French fort at Mobile. See Walter J. Saucier and Kathrine Wagner Seineke, "François Saucier, Engineer of Fort de Chartres, Illinois," in *Frenchmen and French Ways in the Mississippi Valley*, ed. John Francis McDermott (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1969), 199-227. The Vauban style of fort was the prevalent plan of the day for substantial forts in America and Europe, and consisted of a polygonal design with bastions at the corners to command the curtains.

⁷For a general description of the fort and its surroundings, see Babson, "Architecture," 23-28.

War, but its main purpose was not military. Fort Chartres acted as the administrative center of the French Illinois colony and as the seat of the colony's governors. Though protecting the fur trade remained an important consideration at Fort Chartres, most of the actual trading took place in the area's trading towns, especially Kaskaskia to the south and Cahokia to the north, or deep within Indian country itself. Fort Chartres's garrison was more concerned with administering the sale and distribution of farmland and maintaining order amongst thousands of nearby settlers and hundreds of slaves. Almost all them were engaged in agricultural activities rather than the fur business. With a civilian population employed almost entirely in farming, Illinois resembled the English colonies along the Atlantic more than other French colonies based on fishing or fur trading.⁸ This familiarity should have provided an advantage to incoming English administrators.

Thousands of permanent Indian residents lived alongside the French settlers and African and Creole slaves inhabiting the villages around Fort Chartres. Two villages of Michigameas lived only a couple of miles from the fort. Fifteen miles to the south,

⁸Fort Chartres's occupation as a mercantile administrative center rather than a fur entrepôt has been established in part through archaeological study of its settlement pattern compared with other French sites. See Keene, "Fort de Chartres," 33-41, for a discussion and summary of archaeological research on Fort Chartres. Agriculture, social patterns, and village organization made French colonial Illinois resemble English colonial patterns more than prevalent French ones. Illinois agriculture produced exceptional surpluses of grain and provisioned French forts throughout Illinois, as well as sending hundreds of thousands of pounds of food down the Mississippi for export. An incisive study of the nature of agricultural life in French Illinois is Carl J. Ekberg, *French Roots in the Illinois Country: The Mississippi Frontier in Colonial Times* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998). For a briefer description and comparison between French Illinois and English colonies, which posits that the shared manorial village experience of English and French farmers dictated colonial settlement patterns to a far greater degree than religious, national, or legal traditions, see Winstanley Briggs, "Le Pays de Illinois," *WMQ*, 3rd ser. 47:1 (Jan. 1990): 30-56.

Kaskaskias maintained a permanent village about a mile from the French village of that name. Even at those nearby villages, Indian residents disappeared for months at a time on hunting trips. Other Illinois groups, including Peorias and Cahokias from farther north, made frequent visits to the French posts up and down the Mississippi.

Local Indians looked to the French for protection as well as economic opportunities and presents. Through the early and mid-eighteenth century, Illinois groups suffered attacks by Fox and Sauk groups from the north, Kickapoos and Potawatomis from the Wabash region, and Chickasaws, Creeks, and Cherokees from the southeast. Equally powerful Osage, Missouri, and Sioux groups pressured the Illinois region from west of the Mississippi. Illinois Indians fought and negotiated with surrounding groups of Indians and maintained modest livings through the fur trade. By 1757, Illinois Indians reportedly sent several hundred packs of furs down the Mississippi each year.⁹ Because of Fort Chartres's sensitive geographic location, beside the Mississippi between the mouths of the Ohio and the Missouri, its garrison would encounter Indian groups from throughout the American interior.¹⁰

Indians whom British newcomers met at Fort Chartres were often belligerent. Many Illinois groups participated in the 1763 Indian uprising and maintained their animus long after the main hostilities ceased. Much of the credit for preparing such a

⁹"Memoir of Bougainville," *WHC*, 18:176-77.

¹⁰For an overview of the many Illinois Indian groups living near Fort Chartres during the century preceding the British occupation, see Emily J. Blasingham, "The Depopulation of the Illinois Indians, Part 1," *Ethnohistory* 3:3 (Summer, 1956): 193-211. Kathleen DuVal provides a full study of Osage and Quapaw dominance in the lower and central Mississippi Valley, which presents clues as to why the British would encounter difficulties in impressing and negotiating with Indians in the area. *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

harsh reception for the new British masters of Illinois must go to Pontiac himself, who concentrated on fomenting rebellion in the Illinois heartland after his siege of Detroit failed. Charlot Kaské, a Shawnee resistance leader, may have accomplished even more in turning the region's residents against British rule. Both of these Indian insurgents lobbied forcefully for aid in their rebellion from the French commanders in Illinois. When rebuffed by them, they organized Illinois Indians and French *habitants* into anti-British cadres who they hoped would prevent the British takeover of the Illinois country.¹¹ But opposition to British rule also came from many grassroots sources, and was remarkably heartfelt.

Indians in the region needed little encouragement to oppose the incoming British regime. They feared that it would bring English settlers and expansionist Indian groups from the east to displace them. They also worried that British commandants would be less generous with gifts than their French forbears. Up and down the Mississippi, Indians

¹¹Until recently historians granted Pontiac most of the credit for inciting anti-British fervor in Illinois. J. H. Schlarman, *From Quebec to New Orleans, The Story of the French in America: Fort de Chartres* (Belleville, IL: Buechler Publishing Company, 1929), 376-96; Peckham, *Pontiac and the Indian Uprising*, 265-87. Pontiac was undoubtedly effective at inspiring Illinois Indians, and even better at convincing British authorities of his influence. For much of 1764 and 1765, Thomas Gage was convinced that Pontiac was the key to effectively implanting British rule in Illinois and that the Ottawa headman must either be brought over to British interests or "knocked in the head." Gage to Johnson, July 2, 1764, *WJP*, 11:249-50. Richard White argues that Pontiac's status was, at least in part, a creation of British Indian policy. By imbuing the Ottawa leader with pan-Indian importance, Gage and Johnson made dealing with him the solution to Indian resistance in Illinois. *The Middle Ground*, 295-300. More recently, historians have elevated Kaské's role in encouraging Indian and *habitant* resistance to British rule. Gregory Evans Dowd suggests that Kaské might have been a stauncher advocate of the Delaware Prophet Néolin's message of native cultural rebirth than Pontiac himself. Dowd also emphasizes Kaské's close associations and friendships with French officials in Illinois and New Orleans. *War Under Heaven*, 217-19. White emphasizes Kaské's role as a resistance leader after Pontiac decided to moderate his anti-British efforts. *The Middle Ground*, 300-05.

took up arms against English traders and dismissed official French pleas to accept the inevitability of British rule.¹² Rumors ran rampant that French *habitants* and traders were inciting Indians and preparing to resist British occupiers. This spirit of resistance manifested itself during the first futile British attempt to occupy Fort Chartres.

On February 27, 1764, 12 boats carrying 324 soldiers and 47 women and children, under the command of Major Arthur Loftus, attempted to ascend the Mississippi from New Orleans. Such ascents, against the river's current, were always arduous, time-consuming, and dangerous. Three weeks later, about two hundred miles upriver from New Orleans, a small party of Tunica Indians attacked the convoy. Already terrified by French warnings of Indian depredations on the Mississippi and lacking knowledge of local Indian ways, Loftus ordered a full retreat to New Orleans. He blamed Louisiana's governor D'Abbadie for encouraging the attacks, despite the governor's many warnings against attempting the ascent. But the attack was a warning to Britain and served as a harsh welcome to the region for the new masters of Illinois.¹³ Gage seemed unsurprised and somewhat relieved that more people were not lost in the attack; he feared that lavish Indian presents would probably be necessary to possess the Illinois country. "We have been obliged to do the same with many States in Africa we despise," he wrote glumly to

¹²In late 1763, at the height of the Indian uprising, French officials could do little to placate Indian belligerents in Illinois, despite genuine attempts. Pierre Joseph Neyon de Villiers to Jean-Jacques-Blaise D'Abbadie, Dec. 1, 1763, *WHC*, 18:259-61.

¹³For the French account of Loftus's failed expedition, see *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library* (Springfield: The Library, 1903-), 10:225-32 (hereafter cited as *IHC*). For Loftus's account of the attack, see Loftus to Gage, Apr. 9, 1764, *IHC*, 10:237-38. French leaders criticized Loftus for disregarding their warnings and retreating in the face of what they considered a small, routine Indian attack. They estimated the number of attackers as about thirty men. Loftus thought 200 Indians had attacked, and he and his four officers immediately agreed to retreat all the way to New Orleans.

William Johnson. The commander-in-chief began planning for an expensive occupation.¹⁴

For Indians in the region south of Illinois, payment was not the issue. To find out why the Tunicas and others had attacked the English convoy, the French commandant at Pointe Coupeeé, D'Esmazellieres, simply called them to his post and asked them why they did not keep their promises not to bother the English. The delegation's chiefs, Perruquier and Bride le Boeuf, responded disdainfully to their French ally. "Do you find us guilty? Have us put in irons and send us to the great chief," they dared the commandant, "We shall see if he will have us put to death." When D'Esmazellieres reminded the chiefs that the British were determined to pass through their lands and carry on to Illinois, they showed remarkable solidarity with their Illinois neighbors, and outlined some of their anti-British complaints:

The red men of that territory will never let them pass. The French, our brothers, have never given us any disease, but the English have scarcely arrived, and they have caused nearly all our children to die by the smallpox they have brought. Notice, father, if we were to let them settle on the river, they would build forts and forts; and as soon as they were established, they would kill our brothers, the French, and poison us. Father, become angry if you will; our plan is to go and await them on the Point aux Ecors; and if they wish to return, we shall have the glory of driving them away again.¹⁵

With Illinois still in Indian and French hands at the close of 1764, occupying the region began to seem impractical. Reports from the few British intelligence sources in Illinois (mostly British traders) confirmed the enormity of the undertaking. John Bradstreet, fresh from squandering his chance to negotiate a meaningful *denouement* to the Indian uprising in Ohio country, informed his superiors of his views on the Illinois

¹⁴ Johnson to Gage, June 9, 1764, *WJP*, 11:223.

¹⁵ D'Esmazellieres to D'Abbadie, Mar. 14, 1764, *IHC*, 10:236.

problem. He had been assured by "persons lately from the Illinois" that 600 French *habitants* and 1,000 black slaves, all armed and ready to fight, would never allow British troops to take possession of the region. Furthermore, French residents had so incited the western Indians with tales of imminent British depredations that no convoys would ever be allowed up the Mississippi. "The only way to establish ourselves amongst the Savages," he opined, "is to begin, by coming upon them by ways unfrequented, undiscovered, and with such Force, as shall make such an impression as shall be lasting." Bradstreet understood the value of overawing Indians with a strong first impression and suggested sending at least three thousand regular troops down the Ohio River quickly and quietly. With such a strong and sudden occupation, and with the purchased aid of other Indian groups in the region, Illinois and Wabash Indians and *habitants* would put aside their dreams of a French return and accept British authority.¹⁶

If Bradstreet suspected that only a large, rapid invasion could quickly implant British rule on the Mississippi, then the terrible thought must have crossed the minds of Indian resistance leaders as well. They continued to hope for French help, but as time went on it became clear that the long-rumored awakening of the French father in America would never happen.¹⁷ After D'Abbadie's death on February 4, 1765, Charlot Kaské lost no time in meeting with the new governor of Louisiana, Charles Aubry. Accompanied by Illinois chief Levancher, he was surprised and unhappy to find Aubry accompanied by three English officers, including Indian Superintendent for the Southern Department John

¹⁶"[John] Bradstreet's Thoughts on Indian Affairs," Dec. 4, 1764, *NYCD*, 7:693.

¹⁷Except for the occasional gossip of French traders, there was probably little reason for Indians to expect the French to return. Gregory Evans Dowd has argued convincingly that Indians spread such rumors to influence the French and induce them to return. Dowd, "The French King Wakes Up In Detroit: 'Pontiac's War' in Rumor and History," *Ethnohistory* 37:3 (Summer 1990): 254-78.

Stuart, and his agent Pierce Sinnot. Kaské was polite to the British visitors, but warned them to stay out of his own village of Scioto. Shawnees there feared losing their lands to settlers, and Kaské could not answer for the safety of any British interloper.

Levacher was more direct. "I came from the Illinois to see if it were true that the country had been ceded to the English and having learned it I am surprised that the emperor has ceded it," he groused to Aubry and his visitors. "Since he rejects us, we are masters of our bodies and our lands." Turning to the British officers, he warned them that it would take some time to earn the Illinois Indians' trust: "You English only ask to kill; you have caused the red men to die; do not be surprised if I speak to you likewise; if I scold you, my heart is still sore because I have seen so many French and Indians die together. When the English conduct themselves well toward the red men, we shall look upon them with pleasure."¹⁸ With the French governor's influence fading among resistant Illinois natives, the British would be on their own in finding a solution to the impasse.

Through the winter and spring of 1765, individual British emissaries made their way to Fort Chartres, with varying degrees of success. Alexander Maisonville and Jacques Godfroi, two trader-interpreters with wide and deep connections in Indian country, made the trip from Detroit to Chartres in February. They met with several Illinois chiefs, who voiced guarded suggestions that they might agree to live under a British regime. The next effort, by Lt. John Ross and trader Hugh Crawford, did not end as well. Fearful of a rumored incursion into Illinois by Pontiac and three thousand followers, Ross and Crawford made haste from Mobile to Fort Chartres in February.¹⁹

¹⁸Speeches of Charlot Kaské and Levacher to Aubry et al., Feb. 24, 1765, *IHC*, 10:448-51.

¹⁹Ross to Robert Farmar, Feb. 21, 1765, *IHC*, 10:442-43.

There the fort's commandant, St. Ange, arranged for them to meet with headmen of the Kaskaskias, Cahokias, Peorias, Michigameas, Osages, and Missouris. These delegates declared angrily that they would never submit to British occupation and seemed offended at Ross's very presence. Tomeroy, a Kaskaskia chief, ordered Ross and Crawford to leave immediately and warned that if any Englishmen tried to return, their warriors would make them "fall in the water." An Osage chief, enraged at seeing Ross in St. Ange's house, tried to attack the English officer with a hatchet and would have killed him if St. Ange had not intervened. When St. Ange heard that Chippewa and Potawatomi chiefs were on their way to capture Ross and Crawford, they finally fled for their lives down the Mississippi.²⁰ With another major attempt to ascend the river from Mobile scheduled for that summer, British advance men marked little success in making favorable impressions on the region's Indians. So far, the Indians had done all the intimidating, and more diplomacy would be needed.²¹

Events in 1765 marked little improvement in making a good British impression on the Illinois inhabitants, despite a vigorous campaign of diplomacy and military force. Gage ordered veteran Indian agent George Croghan and Lt. Alexander Fraser to travel down the Ohio, from Fort Pitt to Fort Chartres, to size up the situation. They were to take several respected Shawnee and Delaware chiefs with them to avoid trouble with belligerent Indians and to prove that those nations had made their peace with Britain. Gage suggested that Croghan remind Indians in Illinois that Cherokees and Chickasaws

²⁰Ross to Farmar, May 25, 1765, *IHC*, 10:481-83; "Crawford's Statement," Aug. 10, 1765, *IHC*, 10:481-83; St. Ange to D'Abbadie, April 7, 1765, *IHC*, 10:476-80. St. Ange had not yet heard about D'Abbadie's death; news could take months to travel up the Mississippi.

²¹Dowd, *War Under Heaven*, 219-21.

could be induced to ravage the region on Britain's behalf and that Sauk, Fox, and Sioux groups were eager to help as well. Above all, Illinois Indians were to be told that the English would not attempt the kind of invasion suggested by Bradstreet, unless the Indians "by their own folly and Obstinacy" forced them to do so. At the same time, another Mississippi convoy, commanded by Major Robert Farmar, would proceed upriver and occupy Fort Chartres and the surrounding towns.²²

Croghan's expedition began with an unfortunate series of trade-inspired delays. In early March, when Croghan and his party set out for Fort Pitt enroute to Fort Chartres, he brought along Indian trade goods from the Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan Company. Since Gage had not yet approved the commencement of British trading in Illinois, Croghan hid the goods among presents sent by the crown for the Illinois Indians. Col. Henry Bouquet had issued a pass for the presents and Croghan hoped that this pass would also protect his illicit goods. This would make him and his allied Philadelphia traders first on the scene in Illinois. However, Croghan had not counted on the anti-Indian Paxton uprising in Pennsylvania. The "Paxtoners" sought to interdict any provincial supplies destined for Indians, and on March 5 they disregarded Bouquet's pass and destroyed most of Croghan's trade goods. When Johnson heard about the attack and the unauthorized goods, he warned Croghan that he would have to defend his actions. Gage was less sympathetic. "Mr. Croghan thought to take advantage of his Employment, to be first at the market and to make his Business an Affair of Trade, instead of Carrying on the Service," Gage accused. To make matters worse, Croghan had asked the Shawnee and Delaware chiefs and their followers to hold a conference with him at Fort Pitt, causing a

²²Gage to Fraser, and Gage to Croghan, Dec. 30, 1764, Gage Papers AS, vol. 29.

necessary but unexpected delay. Though Croghan later cleared himself of wrongdoing by proving that he had Bouquet's permission to disguise the trade goods as presents, it was an inauspicious start and delay for his Illinois expedition.²³

Fraser grew tired of waiting for Croghan and set out in a bateau with Alexander Maisonville and ten other men for Fort Chartres. Fraser, Maisonville, and three of the men arrived at Kaskaskia on April 17 and almost immediately encountered suspicious Indian enquiring about their mission. Fraser knew that John Ross had been allowed to leave Illinois alive on the condition that no other Englishmen would come, so he treaded lightly. He left his supply train at Kaskaskia (where they were subsequently attacked and plundered), and went to Fort Chartres to meet with St. Ange. Suddenly, Pontiac and several of his followers grabbed Fraser and threatened to kill him. St. Ange pleaded successfully for Fraser's life. Pontiac agreed to turn him over, though over a course of several days Fraser endured more captivities and cruelties by Pontiac's men, especially during several alcohol-fueled revels when Pontiac was too indisposed to protect him. But unlike Loftus and Ross, Fraser held his ground and managed eventually to make a good impression on Pontiac. When St. Ange advised Fraser to flee, he insisted upon staying and parleying with the hostile Indians. When Pontiac challenged Fraser's claims that the Shawnees and Delawares were at peace with Britain, he did not back down. Illinois Indians eventually apologized to Fraser for attacking and holding his men at Kaskaskia; they privately claimed that Pontiac made them do it. Fraser finally did flee down the Mississippi, at Pontiac's insistence. He left behind some Illinois Indians more amenable

²³Johnson to Croghan, Apr. 4, 1765, *WJP*, 4:706-07; Johnson to John Penn, Apr. 12, 1765, *WJP*, 4:710-11; Gage to Johnson, Apr. 15, 1765, *WJP*, 4:717-19; Johnson to Penn, June 7, 1765, *WJP*, 11:776-77.

to British rule, though many other groups, especially Ojibwas and Potawatomis from the Great Lakes region, remained “resolved not to admit the English to come into their country.”²⁴ When another British delegation arrived in June, sent this time by John Stuart, they met with similar threats and insults and fled in a similar fashion.²⁵

Croghan found even greater danger on his journey, but more diplomatic success. After meeting with Shawnee and Delaware delegates at Fort Pitt and eliciting hopeful promises of peace, Croghan felt that he could continue on to Fort Chartres.²⁶ He set off down the Ohio on May 15, with a party that included Shawnee and Delaware delegates to corroborate his messages of peace to the Western Indians. On June 8, near the mouth of the Wabash River, a large party of Kickapoos and Mascoutins attacked the expedition, killing five men and wounding everyone else. Three of the five dead were Shawnee delegates and their deaths made the surprise attack into a major diplomatic blunder for the western Indian resistance movement. Threats of British incursions only served to anger Illinois and Wabash Indians, but the Shawnees were a known and potent danger in the region, and now a blood feud had been incited. Croghan and the other survivors were marched to Vincennes and then to Ouiatonen, where he repeatedly tried to convince his

²⁴“Report of Alexander Fraser on Indians in the Illinois Country,” Gage Papers AS, vol. 137:4; Fraser to Gage, May 15, 1765, *IHC*, 10:491-92; Fraser to Campbell, May 17, 1765, *IHC*, 10:493-94; Fraser to Gage, May 18, 1765, *IHC*, 10:494-95; Fraser to Campbell, May 20, 1765, *IHC*, 10:495-97; Gage to Johnson, July 25, 1765, *WJP*, 4:798-800.

²⁵This delegation consisted of Pierce Acton Sinnot and Harpain de la Gauterais. Croghan to Johnson, August 17, 1765, *WJP*, 11:900; Gage to Johnson, June 30, 1765, *WJP*, 4:779. Stuart later claimed unconvincingly that his sending Sinnot to Illinois helped the eventual takeover of Fort Chartres. Stuart to Johnson, Mar. 30, 1766, *WJP*, 12:54-55. See also Dowd’s description of the Fraser and Sinnot expeditions in *War Under Heaven*, 223-25.

²⁶For a short description of Croghan’s dealings at Fort Pitt in 1765, see Jon William Parmenter, “Pontiac’s War: Forging New Links in the Anglo-Iroquois Covenant Chain,” *Ethnohistory*, 44:4 (Autumn 1997): 635-36.

captors that peace with Britain would be preferable to war with the Shawnees, Delawares, and southern Indian nations.

Finally, Croghan met Pontiac, just returned from his meetings at Fort Chartres with Fraser. After many parleys, Pontiac and Croghan traveled to Detroit to finalize a mutually agreeable peace. Pontiac guaranteed that Croghan and other British forces would have safe passage into Illinois. The British would be allowed to garrison French posts, but not to expand settlements without Indians' permission. Croghan later admitted to Johnson, "The Killing of the Shawanese Deputies, & Plundering me hath been of more Service to his Majesty's Indian Interest, than a considerable Sum Expended in presents." The door to Illinois was finally open, due more to an excess of Indian exuberance than to any appearance of British strength. To accomplish their goals in Illinois, the new British occupants of Fort Chartres would still need to prove their mettle.²⁷

British authorities at Fort Pitt took advantage of the unexpected peace made at Ouiatonen, as well as unseasonably high water levels in the Ohio River, and immediately sent a company of the 42nd Infantry under the command of Capt. Thomas Sterling to hold Fort Chartres. Sterling's detail made rapid progress through the Ohio country, reaching Chartres on October 10. Local Indians were caught by surprise; usually they received intelligence from their Shawnee and Potawatomi allies about any large convoy traveling down the Ohio. When Sterling's men appeared suddenly, Indians "came running with

²⁷George Croghan, "Croghan's Journal, 1765," in Rueben Gold Thwaites, ed., *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846* (Cleveland: A. H. Clark Co., 1904-1907), 1:126-66; Croghan to Johnson, July 12, 1765, *WJP*, 11:836-41; Johnson to Gage, Aug. 9, 1765, *WJP*, 11:880; Croghan to Johnson, Aug. 17, 1765, *WJP*, 11:900-01; Johnson to Gage, Oct. 26, 1765, *WJP*, 4:859; Croghan to Johnson, Nov. 1765, *NYCD*, 7:788. For a fuller elucidation of Croghan's "divide and rule" strategy in his 1765 meetings at Ouiatonen and Detroit, see Dowd, *War Under Heaven*, 225-28.

pipes and belts.” When they discovered that Sterling brought only a small detachment and a dozen Indians, they began to act insolently and threaten the soldiers, but by then Sterling and his men were safely ensconced in the fort. This was a lucky break for Sterling. None of the local chiefs had been at Ouatonen or knew about the peace made there, and might have felt free to attack the British company.²⁸

Sterling raised the British colors over Fort Chartres and took official possession of what one of his lieutenants described as “one of the prettiest stone forts” he had ever seen. Unfortunately, the fort was almost completely devoid of ammunition and stores and the French had removed most of the functioning artillery.²⁹ Sterling took note of the fort’s deficiencies and counted the local Indians living near the fort.³⁰ He then proceeded to read Gage’s proclamation announcing the new regime to any French *habitants* that remained in the nearby villages of Chartres and Kaskaskia. Sterling reported that only a few French troops had garrisoned the fort since the end of the Seven Years’ War and the Indians had been “quite Masters” of the region, treating the *habitants* “as they thought proper.” This, thought Sterling, accounted for so many French residents fleeing to the western side of the river. It is more likely that they simply did not wish to remain under British rule and reasonably expected violence to erupt during the British takeover.³¹ This remained a possibility for the new garrison. Robert Farmar’s occupying force had not yet arrived from Mobile and winter was closing in. Surrounded by hostile natives, without

²⁸The British description of the official surrender of Fort Chartres is in *IHC*, 11:275-76. For the reactions of the Indians, see Gage to Johnson, Dec. 30, 1765, *WJP*, 11:988; Gage to Johnson, Feb. 10, 1766, *WJP*, 11:16.

²⁹James Eddingstone to [unknown], Oct. 17, 1765, *IHC*, 11:105-06.

³⁰Sterling counted 150 warriors living in the Kaskaskia Indian village, and 40 Michigameas and 250 Peorias living in the closest village, about a mile upriver from the fort. Sterling to Gage, Dec. 15, 1765, *IHC*, 11:124-27.

³¹Sterling to Gage, Oct. 18, 1765, *IHC*, 11:107-11.

sufficient stores, ammunition, working cannon, or even an interpreter, Sterling and his small band faced tense times in the great limestone fort.

George Croghan was not going to let Sterling's inconveniences interrupt the diplomatic momentum he had started at Ouiatonen and Detroit. He wrote exuberantly to Johnson, "All doubts are removed respecting our obtaining Possession of the Illinois Country; Capt. Sterling being Arrived and received, at Fort Chartres, with open Arms by the Natives & without meeting, with the least Interruption, on his Passage thither." Despite the region being surrounded by "four very Powerful Indian Confederacys," Croghan was happy to note that their possession of Illinois was brought about "with the Natives Consent, which however, we could not do by Force, Tho' attempted, at a very Considerable expence, for two years past." Of course, a garrison of any size was vulnerable to an Indian siege, especially with long, fragile supply lines leading down the Ohio that could be cut off at any time. Croghan recommended making a colony out of the Illinois and establishing civil government, as the French had done. With an influx of British settlers, the European population would soon exceed that of the Indians and allow Illinois to become a profitable agricultural colony instead of a drain on the crown's assets.³²

Sterling's stay at Fort Chartres was short. On December 2, 1765, Farmar and the 34th Regiment arrived to relieve Sterling's men and to begin the occupation of Illinois in earnest. It had taken five arduous months for Farmar's convoy to navigate upstream from Mobile, partly because his river pilot had deserted enroute. The situation he found offered little compensation for his troubles. He immediately realized that Fort Chartres was

³²Croghan to Johnson, Dec. 27, 1765, *WJP*, 4:886-89.

'likely to be carried away by the River" in a matter of months, despite its size and stone construction. Furthermore, local farmers could supply no more than 50,000 pounds of flour and 1,250 pounds of corn meal, which would supply the men of the garrison only until July and leave none for the four thousand-or-so Indians from throughout the region that could be expected in the summer. Presents would be needed to placate Indian visitors, but most of Farmar's had been ruined in the journey and the rest had been given to friendly Indians they met along the way. Finally, Farmar found the remaining *habitants* to be just as hostile to his presence as many of the Indians. But the biggest problem might have been Farmar himself, who saw French intrigue everywhere and, according to Gage, was "not very knowing in the Treating or Management of Indians." Britain had occupied Illinois, but creating an appearance of strength would take more time.³³

Farmar's provisioning problems would remain a constant detriment to the British occupation of Fort Chartres. Planted in the midst of what Croghan had once called the "granary of Louisiana," the British garrison lacked sufficient numbers to police the fur trade, placate local Indians, and still provide agricultural labor. French residents had always faced a labor shortage in the region, necessitating the use of over a thousand slaves. The French had provisioned Fort Chartres twice a year by huge convoys sent from New Orleans. With that city under Spanish control, most provisions would have to come down the Ohio from Fort Pitt, or through Illinois from Detroit. In March 1766, Farmar reported that he would need 50,000 more pounds of flour from local sources before he

³³Farmar to Gage, Dec. 16-19, 1765, *IHC*, 11:131-34; Gage to Johnson, Mar. 9, 1766, *WJP*, 12:39-40.

could hope to be provisioned again.³⁴ In April, only 2,000 pounds of wheat flour and 7,000 pounds of corn meal were available from all local sources.³⁵ Buffalo meat could sometimes be counted on when grain supplies ran low, but hunting in Indian country carried its own hazards. For example, in May 1766 Farmar reported that a Fox Indian raid on the Kaskaskias made buffalo hunting too risky. Even when buffalo meat could be provided, supplies of cured or salted meat spoiled easily in the Illinois heat. Indeed, in early summer, Indians started to arrive at Fort Chartres asking for meat; the French had always given it to them, they said. Farmar was reduced to telling them that the British had no meat even for themselves. This actually incurred some sympathy from the visiting Indians, though probably not much respect.³⁶

Part of this supply problem was the tenuousness of the French *habitants'* affections to the new British regime. Labor shortages remained throughout the British occupation, even after some French farmers returned to their lands east of the Mississippi. But with the threat of Indian attacks always present, French farmers could not be relied upon to help the garrison in times of trouble. In 1770, Joseph Moore, Fort Chartres's deputy commissary, noted that even with an abundance of buffalo, Indian corn, and wheat that could be produced nearby, the French would often withhold their stores of food if they feared imminent Indian uprisings. The few English farmers in Illinois could probably be counted on to help feed the garrison, but unless a provisioning system could be arranged that placed "as Slender a Relyance as possible on the French

³⁴Farmar to Gage, Mar. 28, 1766, Gage Papers AS, vol. 50.

³⁵Farmar to Gage, Apr. 8, 1766, Gage Papers AS, vol. 50.

³⁶Farmar to Gage, May 9, 1766, Gage Papers AS, vol. 51.

inhabitants," the fort could never be secured.³⁷ Croghan suggested that sufficient provisions could be purchased at Vincennes, the largest settlement between Fort Chartres and Detroit, but the farmers there would not take French or British currency as payment. Croghan argued that, as dangerous as it might be to ship caches of silver through Indian country, buying from Vincennes would still be easier and more convenient than provisioning Fort Chartres from Fort Pitt or New Orleans.³⁸ But outside provisioning would be needed throughout British tenure at the fort. In the later years of the British regime, Fort Chartres and the smaller posts at Cahokia and Kaskaskia had to maintain huge, expensive stockpiles of consumable (and perishable) goods in store, in case of Indian attacks, Spanish incursions, or any number of other troubles.³⁹

At the heart of the Illinois labor crisis was the number of French settlers fleeing to the French/Spanish side of the Mississippi. Many of Kaskaskia's residents had fled and those who remained lived haphazardly in scattered houses, where their livestock was at the mercy of thieves. Cahokia's inhabitants who remained worked mainly in the fur trade and produced few agricultural goods. Neither town was well guarded; Engineer Philip Pittman described the "fort" at Cahokia as differing from the other houses there only "in it's being one of the poorest."⁴⁰ Chartres Village had been nearly emptied during the interlude between the war's end and the British arrival. Now, residents continued to abandon their houses without giving notice at the fort, leaving legal titles to the properties

³⁷Moore to Robert Leake, Aug. 17, 1770, Gage Papers AS, vol. 94.

³⁸Croghan to Gage, Jan. 12, 1767, *WJP*, 12:253-55.

³⁹"Return of Provisions in Store at Fort Chartres, Kaskaskia, and Cahokia," May 24, 1770, Gage Papers AS, vol. 93; "Return of Provisions in Store at Fort Chartres," May 24, 1771, Gage Papers AS, vol. 106.

⁴⁰Pittman to Gage, Feb. 24, 1766, Gage Papers AS, vol. 48.

unclear.⁴¹ At Cahokia, this issue created Indian-British land disputes. Indians felt that they should be allowed to reoccupy lands they sold to the French settlers after the properties had been abandoned. This promised trouble for the British, who had always expected to be allowed to purchase French lands previously bought from Indians.⁴²

Local Indians also fled from the region during the British regime. Rumors persisted throughout the entire British tenure of French plots to turn local Indians against the British, and these may have accounted for some Indian dislocation. Farmer and one of his officers, Capt. James Campbell, both reported rumors supposedly spread by French traders that the English were putting poison in the food and liquor given to Indians. A group of Missouris made a long trip to Fort Chartres in April 1766 specifically to discern the veracity of this report, and to warn Farmer that if any of their people died from poisoned English goods, other nations would avenge them. These Missouris believed the rumor to such an extent that they refused to drink any English liquor until they saw Farmer and his men drink it first.⁴³ Many Indians who fled across the Mississippi did so out of panic that the British would attack them for their roles in the Indian uprising. Others believed that the English would kill them to steal their land, or out of pure hatred. Some of these natives returned as soon as they saw that the garrison had no interest in subduing any local Indians.⁴⁴ During the first year of the British regime, dislocation of

⁴¹"Return of Houses" Mar. 19, 1766, Gage Papers AS, vol. 50; John Jennings, "Journal from Fort Pitt to Fort Chartres in the Illinois Country," Mar.-Apr. 1766, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 31 (1907): 145-56.

⁴²Farmer to Gage, Apr. 24, 1766, Gage Papers AS, vol. 50.

⁴³Campbell to Gage, Apr. 10, 1766, Gage Papers AS, vol. 50; Farmer to Gage, Apr. 24, 1766, Gage Papers AS, vol. 50.

⁴⁴John Reed to Gage, Apr. 3, 1767, Gage Papers AS, vol. 63.

local populations made stabilizing the region a hard task for the fort's beleaguered garrison.

English attitudes and prejudices toward the French and Indian inhabitants of Illinois cannot have made the situation any easier handle. French colonists must have been a pretty rough and hardy lot, as were many English backcountry settlers. But the vitriol evident in some British communications shows the nationalistic and racial hatred that must have impeded British-French-Indian relations. Croghan hated the French of Illinois and the Wabash country with a passion, and suspected them of all sorts of lies and schemes. He described the residents of Vincennes as "an idle, lazy people, a parcel of renegadoes from Canada" who were "much worse than the Indians." He thought that the French settlers living near St. Joseph and Detroit were similarly lazy and indolent, "fond of breeding mischief, and spiring up the Indians against the English."⁴⁵ Fraser held much the same attitude. Of the Illinois Indians, he wrote: "Nothing can equal their passion for drunkenness, but that of the French Inhabitants, who are for the greatest part drunk every day while they can get Drink to buy in the Colony." Fraser derided the French settlers for depending on their black slaves, who were "obliged to Labour very hard to Support their Masters in their extravagant Debaucheries." Fraser thought that the French of Illinois must all be the descendents of convicts and that they were cruel, dishonest, and incapable of honest labor.⁴⁶ And these two men were British diplomats; one can only imagine what the rank and file of the garrison might have thought about the newest British subjects in Illinois. This French-British cultural conflict only served to

⁴⁵"Croghan's Journal, 1765," in Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, 1:145-46.

⁴⁶Fraser to Haldimand, May 4, 1766, *IHC*, 11:228.

empower local Indians, who could always play Europeans against one another for their own purposes.

Farmer hoped to pacify local Indians and *habitants* during his brief tenure on the Mississippi, but his efforts met with little success. The Cahokia land controversy occupied his final months at Fort Chartres. He called a peace conference to settle the issue in the spring of 1766. As an inducement for peaceful relations, he invited a Chickasaw chief and eighteen of his men to attend. All of the Illinois Indians knew that Britain's numerous Chickasaw and Cherokee allies could be called to the region in case of trouble, either to help enforce British policy among the local natives or to protect the region against trans-Mississippi incursions. Farmer negotiated a tentative treaty of peace between the Illinois and Chickasaw groups, but the agreement carried little weight. Two Illinois groups, the Peorias and Cahokias, left the conference "in a huff," according to Farmer, because the commandant would not let them occupy the former French lands at Cahokia. Some of them had been making themselves nuisances there, stealing and killing cattle and hogs.⁴⁷ Farmer would not solve this issue during his tenure; Col. John Reed relieved him that summer.

In August, George Croghan arrived in Illinois with a contingent of Six Nations and Delaware delegates to settle the Cahokia land issue and to negotiate a meaningful peace. More than one thousand Indians attended, from eight nations on both sides of the Mississippi. Croghan needed only two days to satisfy the visiting Indians. Several groups returned horses they had stolen from the garrison and promised not to steal or kill any more stock. Peorias and Cahokias gave up their attempts to occupy lands they had sold to

⁴⁷Farmer to Gage, May 9, 1766, Gage Papers AS, vol. 51.

French settlers, and all the attendees agreed that the British could purchase such lands from the French owners, rejecting Pontiac's old argument that the Illinois had never permanently sold any land in the region. But the Indians retained their rights to use or cede all other lands as they saw fit, and agreed to keep the roads to Fort Chartres open and safe. "With a little good Usage, they will soon become a very quiet & Peacable People," Croghan wrote to Johnson. "At present Indian Affairs [wear] a different Face in this Country." But he also revealed that his generosity with presents had much to do with the Indians' amicability. Having given away most of his £3,000 worth of Indian presents to Shawnees and others he and his party met at Scioto, Croghan was forced to purchase expensive presents and provisions for the conference from local traders. Given the large numbers of attendees, Croghan felt "There was an absolute necessity of Convincing them at this time that the English were as able to Support them as the French."⁴⁸ Croghan's lavishness satisfied the conference delegates, but shortages in provisions and high local prices continued. If the British government in Illinois wished to convince Indians of their effectiveness in meeting their needs, the effort would be expensive.

Lack of provisions threatened to challenge the garrison's veneer of competence, but deadly epidemics must have made Indians wonder if the newcomers could function at all in the Mississippi Valley. During the British tenure, hundreds of English residents fell victim to a "disorder of the country," which disabled and killed dozens of people every year. Fort Chartres had been constructed, against many objections, in a low-lying region that flooded every spring, leaving sloughs and pools of rancid, standing water that served as remarkably efficient breeding grounds for disease. Trader George Morgan, who

⁴⁸Croghan to Johnson, Sep. 10, 1766, *WJP*, 12:176-77; "Report of George Croghan," Jan. 16, 1767, Gage Papers AS, vol. 61.

arrived at Kaskaskia in 1766 to represent the Philadelphia firm of Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan, noted that between June and October 1766, few inhabitants of Fort Chartres or Kaskaskia escaped the ague and fever that accompanied the disease. The sickness was “not in itself Mortal,” according to Morgan, but the frequency and severity of its onsets were such that other more deadly diseases became hard to avoid. Morgan reported that no Europeans born in Illinois, English or French, lived beyond the age of fifty, and few made it past forty.⁴⁹ During the 1766 conference at Fort Chartres, so much of the British garrison was ill that only three officers and fifty men could perform their duties. Croghan himself was so sick that he was forced to return down the Mississippi and take ship at New Orleans rather than face the more arduous overland journey to Fort Pitt.⁵⁰ The disorder hit newcomers to the region almost upon arrival, and could incapacitate inhabitants for months at a time until they became acclimated, which usually took at least two years.

George Butricke, an ensign who accompanied Col. John Wilkins to Fort Chartres in 1768, described the worst outbreak of the disease. Butricke observed that the five companies of his Royal American regiment appeared perfectly healthy upon their arrival at Kaskaskia in early September. Within three weeks, most of the regiment had contracted the disease. Wilkins, all of his officers, and almost every soldier fell victim to the alternating bouts of chills, shakes, and fever at a rate of 20 men per day. After a week of this epidemiological onslaught, only 19 men remained healthy enough to guard the post. By late October, 28 men, 12 women, and 15 children lay dead. Winter only exacerbated the problem, and by February 1769 fifteen more men had died, along with

⁴⁹George Morgan, “Voyage Down the Mississippi,” Nov. 21, 1766, *IHC*, 11:439.

⁵⁰Croghan to Johnson, Sep. 10, 1766, *WJP*, 12:177.

“almost all the Women and thirty-Seven Children that arrived here with the five companys in perfect health,” according to Butricke. Many of these later deaths were attributed to an outbreak of dysentery that roiled the garrison after the initial fevers had abated. This “Bluddy flux” continued to strike the garrison throughout 1769, leaving one of the largest forts in North America virtually unprotected.⁵¹

To the outnumbered and sickly men of Fort Chartres’s garrison, the entire mission in Illinois must have seemed mysterious. They could not hope to withstand a general Indian uprising without the help of their eastern and southern Indian allies. Capt. Henry Gordon, who escorted English traders to Illinois in the summer of 1766, could hardly believe the conditions and situation he found at Fort Chartres. The garrison was sickly, the Mississippi had moved to within 26 yards of one of the fort’s bastions, and provisions and ammunition were low. The fur trade, England’s main economic mission in the region, had not lived up to expectations because of persistent French competition. To Gordon, English occupation of Illinois served only one purpose: to make a show of British mastery to the Indians. Given the deplorable state of the British presence, the show was unlikely to impress anyone. “Coop’d up at Fort Chartres only, we make a foolish figure,” he complained. Britain could not control either Indians or *habitants* with a post that lacked sufficient funding and provisions. Local residents refused even to extend financial credit to the garrison.⁵²

⁵¹Butricke to Barnsley, Oct. 30, 1768 and Feb. 12, 1769, *IHC*, 16:448-50, 496-500; Morgan to Baynton and Wharton, Oct. 30, 1768, *IHC*, 16:439-40. Disease was a common and deadly problem for soldiers and others at forts throughout North America, but few locations matched Fort Chartres in mortality and infection rates. McConnell, *Army and Empire*, 114-26.

⁵²Harry Gordon, “Gordon’s Journal,” Aug. 20, 1766, *IHC*, 11:301.

Part of the problem facing the new Illinois government was that the few British posts on the Mississippi could scarcely control, or even influence, the vast interior of Illinois and the Wabash country. Without some semblance of order in the region, neither the fur trade nor export agriculture would ever show a profit. In London, the financially strapped government began to lose patience with the Illinois scheme. Gage defended the Fort Chartres operation in 1767, suggesting to the Earl of Shelburne that, despite the obvious problems and expenses of the Illinois occupation, the post maintained “a kind of Superiority over the Indians.” He also argued that Fort Chartres might serve as a check on the French *habitants*, whose allegiances would always be questionable, with so many of their countrymen living on the opposite shores of the Mississippi. He hoped that Croghan’s peace terms and Johnson’s Indian management would create a social climate that would allow the British to profit as well as the French.⁵³

By summer 1768, Gage’s optimism about Illinois had begun to sour. The Illinois occupation was dangerous, expensive, and ineffective. He started to advocate building posts closer to Fort Pitt, Vincennes, and Detroit, where supply and communication lines would be less dependent on the good graces of the Shawnees and Delawares who controlled the Ohio River.⁵⁴ Many observers of the situation, some with financial interests in the British occupation, advised erecting more trading posts and forts in the

⁵³Gage to Shelburne, Feb. 22, 1767, in Clarence Edwin Carter, ed., *The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage with the Secretaries of State, 1763-1775* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931), 122.

⁵⁴Gage to Shelburne, June 16, 1768, Carter, *Correspondence*, 177-78.

Illinois interior, to keep out French traders and to better serve Indian consumers.⁵⁵ Some wondered if Fort Chartres itself was worth the money and effort required to save it from the river. James Campbell thought it would be a shame to abandon a fort that had cost the French tens of thousands of livres to build, just to save a few hundred pounds. But he wondered if the whole mission would be worth the overall cost. Two years of failing to control illegal traders had “entirely Ruined” the fur trade by 1768, according to Campbell. Even French and Spanish traders found trouble raising operating capital for trading expeditions into the north and west.⁵⁶ Fort Chartres was rapidly becoming a post without a mission.

Morgan confirmed this shrinking of the trade in late 1767. Reed had hindered business by charging traders excessive fines and fees every time they passed the fort. And English traders could not operate safely very far from Fort Chartres because British troops could not control the region’s interior. “An English Trader cannot at present with the least Security of his Life venture even to Post Vincent (Vincennes) for want of a garrison there,” he wrote to his partners. Trading farther north was no safer. “To ascend the Mississippi or the Illinois Rivers with goods would be certain Death,” Morgan fretted, “So great is the influence of the French in that Part, by our not having a Post at the Mouth

⁵⁵Reed to Gage, July 21, 1767, Gage Papers AS, vol. 67; William Johnson, “Review of the Trade and Affairs of the Indians in the Northern District of America,” *NYCD*, 7:974; Croghan to Johnson, Oct. 18, 1767, *WJP*, 5:736; William Franklin, “Advantages of an Illinois Colony,” July 10, 1766, *WJP*, 5:320-30.

⁵⁶Campbell to Gage, June 22, 1768, Gage Papers AS, vol. 78.

of the latter.”⁵⁷ For Morgan, the first significant British trader to operate in the region, the fault lay with the British insistence on keeping the center of government at the Mississippi, instead of distributing military assets closer to busy trade centers like Vincennes. Fewer and fewer Indians visited Kaskaskia to trade. With a diminished market for Indian trade goods, Morgan’s company had to make up their losses through the sale of slaves and liquor to *habitants* and the garrison.⁵⁸ Supply and communication lines to the east, which were almost wholly dependent on Indian messengers and guides, were tenuous and unpredictable. This complicated Morgan’s management of the company’s Illinois venture.⁵⁹

Prospects for bringing the region under control were frustrated from the start by the garrison’s inability to control even the local *habitants* who looked to the fort for protection. Major John Forbes, who succeeded Reed in April 1768, wished to “strike a terror” into local Indian groups by convincing them that the French residents of Kaskaskia and the English garrison were bound together as one people. To this end,

⁵⁷Morgan to Baynton and Wharton, Dec. 10, 1767, *IHC*, 16:128-32. Morgan’s attitudes should be taken with a measure of skepticism: he had become an enemy of John Reed by late 1767 because Reed had confounded Morgan’s plan to act as the sole provisioner of Fort Chartres. Morgan was also a strong advocate of establishing civil government in the region and dispensing with military rule, as were many people interested in future of British Illinois. Morgan’s complaints against Reed have merit; others pointed out Reed’s incompetence and corruption. George Phyn to Johnson, Apr. 15, 1768, *WJP*, 6:194-95. Such corruption and graft seems to have been endemic among those who performed the thankless job of commanding remote posts such as Chartres and Michilimackinac. Dowd, *War Under Heaven*, 237-38.

⁵⁸Morgan to Baynton and Wharton, Dec. 11, 1767, *IHC*, 16:138; Morgan to Baynton and Wharton, Feb. 1768, *IHC*, 16:161-65; “Sale of Negroes Kaskaskias,” Oct. 29, 1768, Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan Papers in the Pennsylvania State Archives, ed. George R. Beyer, microfilm (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1967), reel 10, 206-07 (hereafter cited as BWM Papers). Slaves in Illinois were not always African or Creole. Carl J. Ekberg, *Stealing Indian Women: Native Slavery in the Illinois Country* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007).

⁵⁹Morgan to Baynton and Wharton, Dec. 11-22, 1767, *IHC*, 16:132-38, 152-53.

Forbes sent the Kaskaskia *habitants* a proclamation ordering them to form a militia and to muster under arms immediately. The Kaskaskians refused, claiming that their oath of allegiance to Britain contained no such requirement. They feared inciting the local Indians with a public show of arms. French residents had no quarrel with the nearby Kaskaskia Indians, and they were determined to remain neutral in any conflict Britain might find itself in, whether against Indians or Europeans. They accused Forbes of acting high-handedly and dismissed his threats. Frustrated, Forbes told the Kaskaskians that he had no intention of sending their militia into the field, but he insisted that they muster to show their allegiance to Britain. When he arrived in Kaskaskia, the residents again refused to turn out, threatening to move across the Mississippi if he pressed the point, “which indeed they threaten to do whenever any thing happens that displeases them,” complained Forbes. He eventually convinced them to muster, but the episode reveals the complete disdain shown for British government in Illinois. Forbes’s successor, Col. John Wilkins, was similarly ineffective in encouraging French cooperation, admitting in 1770 that the locals looked upon him “nearly as a Cypher.” Inability to control the eight hundred European and enslaved residents of Kaskaskia bode poorly for a garrison hoping to impress the thousands of Indians visiting the post every year.⁶⁰

Reed, Forbes, and Wilkins sought local French aid for good reason. Throughout the British regime, rumors of imminent Indian uprisings raced through the region, necessitating a condition of nearly constant alert at the fort. British officers, and Indian Department officials such as commissary Edward Cole, were instructed to pass on any

⁶⁰Forbes to Gage, Apr. 15, 1768, Gage Papers AS, vol. 76; Inhabitants of Kaskaskia to Forbes, Apr. 15, 1768, Gage Papers AS, vol. 76; Wilkins to Gage, Nov. 11, 1770, Gage Papers AS, vol. 98; “Census of Illinois, 1767,” *IHC*, 11:469.

intelligence of potential Indian trouble. They found no shortage of such news in isolated Illinois. Rumors and intelligence filtered back to Gage and Johnson, telling of mysterious belts circulating throughout the *pays d'en haut* and the Mississippi headlands.⁶¹ In September 1768, a Delaware messenger told Johnson that *all* of the Indians he had met near Fort Chartres and in the Wabash country were opposed to the British and would attack them as soon as the French and Spanish gave the word.⁶² In 1770, Johnson warned Gage and Wilkins that he had received "secret intelligence" that Kickapoos, Piankashaws, and Wawaiaghtanoes would commence a general uprising that summer and eject the British from Illinois.⁶³ Luckily for Wilkins and the Chartres garrison, no such general attacks took place during their tenure.⁶⁴

As in other remote parts of the North American interior, rumors and gossip *were* intelligence, and since little could be done to verify or refute them absolutely, they always had to be taken seriously to some degree.⁶⁵ "Intelligence of this kind is frequently sent," Gage wrote to the Earl of Hillsborough, "And tho' very often without Foundation is not to be Neglected; for we never can be certain of the Designs of the Indians, who are dextrous in Striking a Severe and Sudden Blow when they are least expected."⁶⁶ Indians stood to gain much by spreading these rumors. Specious intelligence of Indian threats

⁶¹Cole to Gage, Oct. 28, 1767, Gage Papers AS, vol. 71.

⁶²"Indian Intelligence," *WJP*, 12:601-03.

⁶³Johnson to Gage, Apr. 6, 1770, *WJP*, 12:813.

⁶⁴The 1770 rumors were especially troubling to Wilkins, who had so many men either sick, foraging for wood and food, or shoring up the endangered fort, that any attack might have been disastrous. Wilkins to Gage, Nov. 12, 1770, Gage Papers AS, vol. 98.

⁶⁵Gregory Evans Dowd has provided the best work on the meanings, importance, and strategies of Indian and frontier rumors. See "The Panic of 1751: The Significance of Rumors on the South Carolina-Cherokee Frontier" *WMQ*, 3rd ser. 53:3 (July 1996): 527-60.

⁶⁶Gage to Hillsborough, Oct. 7, 1769, in Carter, *Correspondence*, 239.

kept the British penned up in their forts and out of Indian country. Intelligence of any quality also sustained a constant hunger for more intelligence, which Indians gladly provided, expecting presents and friendship in return. "The Truth is We are much in the Dark with Respect to all those Nations Notwithstanding the great Sums which have been laid out here," Morgan fretted to his partners, having just heard untrue reports that a new uprising had begun among the Shawnees and Delawares and that Fort Detroit had fallen. Communication between Fort Chartres and Fort Pitt took months, making rumors and backcountry gossip the information standard in British Illinois.

Traders and other British residents living apart from Fort Chartres's protection took rumors even more seriously. Morgan's company maintained trading houses in Vincennes, Kaskaskia and Cahokia, and the small military blockhouses and garrisons in each town offered little protection for traders in the case of Indian attack. By 1769, Morgan was frustrated with the lack of protection. He suggested to his partners that the military government should declare open war on all Indian troublemakers, especially the Wabash Indians near Vincennes and Potawatomis and Kickapoos living near St. Joseph. After all, the company might benefit pretty well from a general Indian war, he wrote to his partners. Besides, if the British garrison remained "coop'd up" in Fort Chartres instead of encouraging and protecting British profits, the whole occupation would be for nothing.⁶⁷

Morgan's worries had a good basis. Local Indians and rumors of impending Indian attacks had troubled his posts since he arrived. In September 1769, one of his traders reported that a "troublesome" rumor at Kaskaskia caused the whole town to

⁶⁷Morgan to Baynton and Wharton, Apr. 24, 1769, *IHC*, 16:526-27.

crowd into the tiny fort for protection.⁶⁸ Later that year, Indians and possibly French allies plundered Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan's trading post at Vincennes, not once but twice.⁶⁹ And a few months later the attacks grew bolder: Indians attacked the company's storehouse in Cahokia. They succeeded in stealing only a few blankets, but killed three of the company's employees.⁷⁰ Wilkins sent a detachment to Cahokia to strengthen its small fort, but everyone knew that the attackers could return at any time and repeat the depredations. Indians even pillaged Morgan's store at Fort Chartres twice in late 1769, right under the sickly garrison's guns.⁷¹

The worst attack on Morgan's interests had happened far from Fort Chartres and yet still vexed the British command. To provide food for the region, Morgan's company sent out parties to hunt for buffalo meat, which was needed for both British and Indian provisioning. In April 1768, a small party of Indians from Vincennes attacked the boats of a hunting party on the Cumberland River, killing twenty men. Indians later brought nine scalps and eight packs of peltry taken from the hunting party to Vincennes. One young man survived to tell the story at Kaskaskia, and Forbes ordered the garrison on alert and began planning his response. He soon heard that the attackers' chiefs meant to come to Fort Chartres to beg for forgiveness. Forbes planned to capture and hold them as hostages until they turned over the killers.⁷² Gage did not approve of Forbes's plan; the

⁶⁸Windsor Brown to Morgan, Sep. 23, 1769, BWM Papers, reel 5, 824.

⁶⁹Wilkins to Gage, Dec. 5, 1769, Gage Papers AS, vol. 88.

⁷⁰Morgan to Baynton and Wharton, Mar. 14, 1770, BWM Papers, reel 1, 417; John Hanson to Wilkins, Gage Papers AS, Apr. 24, 1770, vol. 92.

⁷¹John Finley to James Rumsey, Nov. 1, 1769, BWM Papers, reel 6, 11-12; James Rumsey to Brown, Nov. 14, 1769, BWM Papers, reel 6, 127-28.

⁷²Forbes to Gage, July 18, 1768, Gage Papers AS, vol. 79; Morgan to Baynton and Wharton, July 20, 1768, *IHC*, 16:354-67; Forbes to Gage, July 28, 1768, *WJP*, 6:294; Wilkins to Gage, *WJP*, 6:326.

general had learned much about Indian notions of justice and reciprocity during his tenure, and knew that the chiefs would interpret this taking of Indian ambassadors as a "Breach of Publick Faith." A Cherokee had also told him that the Indians were actually protecting their interests and hunting grounds by killing the party. Had the party restricted their activities to hunting only for food, they might have survived. But the company hunters had been trapping furs too, and the Vincennes Indians deemed this an unfair use of Indian hunting grounds and an infringement on their livelihoods. Wilkins heard of these attacks while on his way to take over command of Illinois. Gage ordered him to find a way to placate the Wabash and Ohio Indians.⁷³

Almost a year after his arrival in Illinois, Wilkins called a meeting with belligerent Indians from the Wabash and Ohio country. In the intervening year, several more confrontations had taken place between the Wabash Indians and the British, including another attack on traders.⁷⁴ Wilkins determined that trying to see the situation from the Indians' perspective would be interpreted as weakness, so he decided to use more confrontational measures. At the conference, he listed several depredations committed by Indians from the Vincennes area, including the attack on traders' boats and men, plundering stores, and threatening to kill Indians allied to the British. Wilkins warned that even though the British presence at Fort Chartres might appear outnumbered and weak, his people could be counted on to avenge Indian insults. "We are a Nation not easily made Angry," Wilkins told the delegates, "But when once we are determined on

⁷³Gage to Hillsborough, Oct. 9, 1768, in Carter, *Correspondence*, 199; Gage to Johnson, Oct 10, 1768, *IHC*, 16:417; Gage to Wilkins, Oct. 11, 1768, *IHC*, 16:418-19.

⁷⁴Gage to Hillsborough, Aug. 12, 1769, *IHC*, 16:576. This attack turned out better for the English traders; they were able to fend off the assailants "with the help of an Indian" and make their escape to Fort Chartres.

Striking an Enemy, they soon feel the weight of our resentment. Our Numbers are as the Stars in the firmament, and it is not in the power of all the Nations in the World to destroy us." Without subtlety or equivocation, Wilkins warned that if they did not stop threatening the peace, he would take it as an open declaration of war. British soldiers and their Indian allies would descend upon the belligerent Wabash and Ohio Indians and destroy them.⁷⁵

To his surprise, Wilkins's threats were met with open defiance. Maringouin, an old chief from the Wabash region, rejected Wilkins's hard-line tactics and threats. "Since you entered this country you alone have caused the misfortunes which have come upon us," he scolded Wilkins. If the English had more people living among the Illinois Indians "as slaves," he suggested, maybe the Illinois would be treated with the same respect as the Shawnees, Delawares, and Iroquois. Cadenette, a war chief, went even further. He refused to even meet with Wilkins, because if he did, he might think only of all the French-allied Illinois killed by British guns and become dangerously angry. Hananaa, another war chief and village headman, warned Wilkins that English guns and trade held no power over them. Using revivalist language, he told the commandant that depriving the Indians of powder and ball would make no difference:

You must know that I know how to use wood to make my weapons and that with this same wood I would kill men. You must be convinced that my father the French will not let me die and that he will satisfy my wants. I shall die holding his hand if you make war on me. You take me for a beast that is destitute of reason, Think you that, having neither powder nor ball, I shall die of hunger? No, and in the belt which you send us there is a man who shuts up the road between us? Do you think that we do not understand this, though I have not as much wit as you?

⁷⁵Speech of Wilkins to Post Vincent, Wabash, and Ohio Indians, August 1769, Native American History Collection, William C. Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Hananaa even ridiculed Wilkins's metaphor and turned it against him. "You talk to me of stars and say that you are as numerous as they are in the sky," he chided Wilkins. "The stars that fall hurt nothing. As for me I am as the trees in the forest; and, when a tree falls, it does harm and kills a man." Wilkins knew that Hananaa's comment about shutting the road meant that these Indians would never support British interests and that anti-British hostility would dominate Illinois and the Wabash country despite his threats. But Wilkins must have paled before the Wabash Indians' withering verbal pummeling, so different from the protestations of poverty and subjection common at Indian conferences farther east. Having just arrived in Illinois, Wilkins found out quickly how insubstantial the British presence looked to some of the region's Indian population.⁷⁶

In addition to attacking Morgan's economic enterprises, Wabash and St. Joseph Indians made it clear to the British government at Fort Chartres that their substantial fort could not protect everyone. In the summer of 1768, Potawatomis had kidnapped a soldier and his wife from Chartres Village and held them as prisoners. Forbes put the fort on alert and restricted the garrison to the post. The Potawatomis later returned the prisoners and begged for Forbes's forgiveness (and presents), and they promised not to repeat such acts, but their point had been made: Indians could grab British soldiers at any time and avoid punishment.⁷⁷ Local Indians allied to the British were also at risk and suffered at the hands of old enemies, despite the garrison's promises of protection. In May 1769, Sauk and Fox Indians scalped six Kaskaskias between Fort Chartres and their village.⁷⁸ A

⁷⁶"Indian Speeches," *WJP*, 7:132-39.

⁷⁷Campbell to Gage, June 26, 1768, Gage Papers AS, vol. 78; Forbes to Gage, June 23 and July 18, 1768, Gage Papers AS, vol. 79.

⁷⁸Cole to Johnson, June 13, 1769, *WJP*, 7:16.

Kickapoo party scalped another soldier and his wife in their bed in April. Wilkins put the garrison on alert yet again, and this condition lasted throughout the summer and winter. By late December, according to Butricke, the garrison was in a “melancholy situation,” with no word from Fort Pitt in over six months, and rumors circulating that the Spanish had closed off New Orleans to the British.⁷⁹

Fears of Indian attacks only increased after Pontiac’s death at the hands of a Peoria chief in Cahokia in April 1769. Several of Pontiac’s western allies vowed to sweep into Illinois and avenge the revolutionary’s ignominious murder. But it is difficult to ascertain whether the constant Indian treats and small-scale raids by Potawatomis and Kickapoos that did occur were intended as revenge or to provide simple, everyday intimidation. Indeed, Edward Cole warned against worrying too much about Pontiac’s avengers, noting that the Illinois Indians themselves seemed pretty discontented to begin with and did not need outside help to make trouble.⁸⁰ Gage agreed that the real trouble could come from unruly Illinois Indians, not the Shawnees and Ottawas who might invade. Indeed, by 1769 Pontiac was a British ally and it was an Illinois chief that had breached the peace. “It seems very Necessary that Something Should be done to keep those Nations in order,” Gage told Johnson, “They seem more and more inclined to raise Commotions as well with the Indians and the White People.”⁸¹ But with Indian tempers flaring and British military threats unable to enforce security, expensive presents were the only sure way to gain Indian cooperation.

⁷⁹Butricke to Barnsley, June 27, 1769, *IHC*, 16:566-67; Butricke to Barnsley, Dec. 29, 1769, *WHC* 18:299.

⁸⁰Cole to Johnson, June 13, 1769, *WJP*, 7:16.

⁸¹Gage to Johnson, Aug. 8, 1769, *WJP*, 7:76-77.

From the beginning of the British occupation of Fort Chartres, the price for British failure to maintain an appearance of power was paid in Indian presents. Croghan spent lavishly on presents during his important conference in 1766, but even after the amicable conclusion of those negotiations, the cost of conducting Indian affairs at Fort Chartres remained high. For example, from July 1 through September 25, 1766, Indian Department expenditures at the fort ran to £1,568. This included the cost of provisions and presents for Indians, transportation costs, interpreters and smiths, and construction. The next six months were almost as expensive.⁸² Compared to the cost of normal military operations at the fort, these sums were immense; for example, the cost of provisioning the personnel of the Royal Regiment of Artillery and the Civil Branch of Ordinance at Fort Chartres for the period between January 1767 and June 1769 amounted to just over £44.⁸³ Part of the Indian Department's enormous cost derived from the remoteness of the region and the high cost of transporting goods. A calculation made in January 1767 estimated that to carry goods down the Ohio from Fort Pitt, a convoy of 45 bateaux would cost £5,217 sterling, not counting the value of the goods themselves.⁸⁴ But the expense of Indian presents had even more to do with the frequency with which they were given, which demonstrated Fort Chartres's precarious social and political position among the Illinois natives.

All of Fort Chartres's commandants lavished presents upon visiting Indians, though the problem was worse in the beginning of the British tenure, with memories of the Indian uprising still fresh. Gage, whose responsibility it was to justify Indian

⁸²"Indian Expenditures," *WJP*, 5:514, 13:396-400.

⁸³"Account of the Number of Rations of Provisions," June 24, 1769, Gage Papers AS, vol. 78.

⁸⁴"Cost of Transporting Provisions," *IHC*, 11:476-77.

Department expenses to skeptical financial auditors at Whitehall, became impatient very quickly. Unlike his predecessor Amherst, who cringed at the very idea of rewarding Indians for good behavior, Gage knew perfectly well that presents were needed to maintain Indian-British amities. But all things had their limits and Gage wanted his remote commanders to give Indians "only what is absolutely Necessary ... and to deal out Presents with a Sparing hand." He told John Reed that presents "must not be lavished any longer" in March 1767, and ordered Fort Chartres's commissary Edward Cole to have the commandant certify all Indian Department bills before remitting them.⁸⁵ Cole's drafts for Indian expenses had shocked Gage and Johnson, and the commander-in-chief warned that if another exorbitant account should cross his desk, he would be "under Necessity of refusing Payment to it." He warned Reed to keep an eye on Cole, who met with Indians more than anyone else at the fort and was liable to be the most intimidated. "The Commissarys at the Posts are not Sent there, to lavish away Presents to every Strolling Indian that comes to a Fort," Gage reminded Reed. "Presents are only to be given to the Heads of Nations, & then frugally and on particular & necessary Occasions."⁸⁶

Cole agreed to have his accounts certified by the fort commandant, but wondered how he could manage Indian affairs without giving out extravagant gifts to visitors. Indians living near the fort were well enough disposed, though they visited quite often and always asked for presents. But it was the droves of Indians coming in from the Missouri country that made matters difficult. They told Cole that the French had always supplied them in the past and they expected the same from the British. Their animosities

⁸⁵Gage to Reed, Mar. 8, 1767, Gage Papers AS, vol. 62.

⁸⁶Gage to Reed, Apr. 14, 1767, Gage Papers AS, vol. 63.

with the Sauks and Foxes prevented their coming to the fort in great numbers early in Cole's tenure, but by summer of 1767 so many had arrived that they took up all of Cole's time.⁸⁷ Cole sent Gage a six-month draft for over £5,000 in March, and the summer season would be even more expensive. To make matters worse, the western Indians did not bring any trade to the fort; they wanted presents, but sold their furs to French traders operating on the Spanish side of the Mississippi. They knew that the British must give presents to them as the only way to secure their friendship and prevent them from conspiring with the French and Spanish.⁸⁸ At the end of the summer, Reed agreed to try keeping costs in check, but worried that it would be impossible with the region under constant Indian domination. "There must be expenses attending the Indians, and very considerable ones," he warned Gage, "Or the Military and Inhabitants must Starve, nothing but Presents prevents them from Destroying the Stock in the Country."⁸⁹ With four thousand Indians visiting Fort Chartres that summer, and with goods costing twice as much as in "any other part of America," Reed worried that his next bill would be just as enormous.⁹⁰

Indian expenses continued to vex Gage and the Indian Department in 1768. Cole's expenses amounted to £10,742 for only one year of activity at Fort Chartres. "This is really so monstrous an Account that I hardly know what can be done with it," Gage despaired to Johnson. He could not understand why "Missilimakinak and the Detroit together ... did not cost more hundreds than the Illinois has cost Thousands," though he

⁸⁷Cole to Croghan, July 3, 1767, *WJP*, 5:578.

⁸⁸Gage to Johnson, July 20, 1767, *WJP*, 5:600-01; Cole to Johnson, Oct. 25, 1767, *WJP*, 5:748-52; Cole to Croghan, Oct. 25, 1767, *WJP*, 5:753-55.

⁸⁹Reed to Gage, Oct. 28, 1767, Gage Papers AS, vol. 71.

⁹⁰Reed to Gage, Oct. 5, 1767, Gage Papers AS, vol. 70.

suspected it was because of Indian intimidation at Fort Chartres. This was not a good enough reason for the commander-in-chief. After all, Detroit was just as vulnerable to attack and siege as Fort Chartres, and Michilimackinac had actually fallen to Indian attack in 1763. Gage asked Johnson for reasons that he could use to justify the large drafts to London, but the Indian superintendent could offer no help. Johnson was just as shocked by the expenses as Gage and embarrassed by a major failure of his department. His own man, Cole, was apparently being intimidated into doling out the most lavish gifts in North America. Johnson told Gage that if Cole was not up to the job he should be withdrawn, and then the post commandant must either retrench the bills or find a way to pay them himself. Gage agreed to let Johnson handle the problem for a while. "After first taking Possession of Posts extraordinary Expences may be necessary," Gage admitted, "but there is no Reason to continue them."⁹¹

Indian demands for presents stoked all of the old prejudices and mistrusts that had preceded the 1763 Indian uprising. For some local natives, presents had become an important part of their livelihood. Illinois Indians offered friendship and protection in return, but contributed few pelts to the local economy. This must have irked the men of the garrison, even if the deal seemed reasonable enough to the natives themselves. After all, given the weak position of the British presence at the fort, Indians might have felt that there was little the British could offer them *except* presents. But the growing importance and profusion of this wholly gift-based system of alliance had begun to strain nerves. A letter to Gage, either from Forbes or one of his officers, paints a harsh picture of the British hostilities forming at Fort Chartres:

⁹¹Gage to Johnson, Apr. 4, 1768, *WJP*, 6:176-77; Johnson to Gage, Apr. 8, 1768, *WJP*, 6:187; Gage to Johnson, Apr. 18, 1768, *WJP*, 6:199.

The immense Expence attending the Indian Department must be a considerable Burthn to the Crown if all the other Nations, on the Continent are so plentifully Supplied as those in this Neighbourhood ... I have for some time observed that the more Presents they receive, the oftner they Return, and are less contented; and that their chief dependence rests more upon his Majesty's Bounty, than their own industry; for while they never move from their Village, but beging and hanging upon the Inhabitants, which gives them such a habit of Idleness (particularly the four Tribes in this District) that they are by the constant use of Spiritous Liquors become Effeminate and Debilitated: so much that nothing can be apprehended, from such a Dastardly Race of Cowards, who impute, the bounty they Receive, [proceeds] from fear not of Love.⁹²

As the year dragged on, the cost of placating Indians at Fort Chartres lessened, but remained expensive. Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan billed the crown £1,600 for presents supplied from March through September 1768. The account gives reasons for some of the presents, making clear the extent to which the garrison depended on the local Indians' good graces. For example, Forbes gave presents to two parties of Vermillion and Kaskaskia Indians for a bit of intelligence, flavored with a hint of intimidation; the Indians revealed that they had received and rejected a belt asking them to attack the English. Black Dog, a Peoria chief, made it clear to Forbes that the French had always renewed friendship with them after the Indians returned from their winter hunt, and that the Peorias "expected and begged" the same treatment from the English. Forbes gave presents to Black Dog again as he left for the summer hunt, and the Peoria chief reminded Forbes that the French and Spanish were always among them, trying to gain advantages over English traders. An Osage chief from west of the Mississippi informed Forbes that the Spanish commander at St. Louis had demanded that they strike the English colors flying over their village. The Osages rebuffed the demand and promised to

⁹²"Presents to Indians," *WJP*, 6:298-99. Another copy of this letter appears in Gage Papers AS, vol. 79, which adds that the French had little use for the Illinois Indians, and gave them only small, inexpensive presents.

buy only English goods from then on, but Forbes knew that their patronage would only continue with abundant gifts. And of course, Pontiac and his retinue needed to be supplied when they visited in the spring. He told Forbes that he wished to see “all his Brethren the Indians” in the region and that he would warn them to “shut their Ears against all bad Birds” if he heard of any anti-British rumors. He also promised not to bother Detroit again and to behave himself. None of this promised good behavior came for free, as Forbes knew well.⁹³

British occupation of Illinois had become, by late 1768, a *cause célèbre* for English politicians opposed to military governance of Indian country. The costs attending the operation of Fort Chartres threatened the entire fort system. In August 1768, Gage told Johnson that the Board of Trade was considering closing both Forts Pitt and Chartres, because of the “great and constant Drains of Cash for Indian Presents. The two ... equal the Expences of half your whole Department.”⁹⁴ Johnson could not provide a reason why Reed and Forbes had not been able to retrench expenses. He told Gage that Reed, Forbes, and Cole (who kept his job until 1769) could not be entirely blamed, and that part of the tendency toward lavishness went with the job. “Gentlemen, whatever their sentiments of Indians are previous to their going to the Outposts, seem to alter them when there,” Johnson admitted to Gage, “And to Consider all Expences incurred as Extremely necessary to Publick Service.”⁹⁵ Cole continued to blame the high cost of goods for much of the problem, but also blamed their French and Spanish “polite neighbours” across the Mississippi for poisoning the Indians’ attitudes against the British, so that huge presents

⁹³“Account of Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan,” *WJP*, 6:366-94.

⁹⁴Gage to Johnson, August 7, 1768, *WJP*, 6:313.

⁹⁵Johnson to Gage, *IHC*, 16:384.

were needed to keep them friendly. He also pointed out that he was making progress; expenses had dropped to about a third of the previous year's total.⁹⁶

But even with a retrenchment in cost, the present-based system had become deeply engrained in British-Indian relations to a degree that was probably not surmountable. Indian Department provisioning had become part of the Indian food system, and could not be easily reduced without introducing hardship to native populations. From April 1766 to Sept. 1768, Fort Chartres issued over 65,000 lbs. of flour, 8,000 lbs. of cornmeal, 24,000 lbs. of beef, 8,000 lbs. of pork, and large quantities of other necessities to local and visiting Indians.⁹⁷ Local Indians could not reasonably turn away from a relationship that offered them food and presents in proportion to the amount of influence they held in the region. Trade could not be used against them because French and Spanish competition offered better prices just across the Mississippi. Sick and disgruntled, often penned up inside their crumbling fort out of fear, and at the mercy of Indian nations on both sides of the Mississippi, the British army could do little to compel local Indians to show greater industry in the fur trade. If the British wished to stay in the region, presents would be the primary currency of friendship.

⁹⁶Cole to Gage, Sep. 13, 1768, Gage Papers AS, vol. 80. Gage's complaints were based ostensibly on the limitations of his operating budget and the dim prospect of profits accruing from backcountry operations. But Catherine M. Desbarats has shown that imperial ambivalence regarding continental operations often fueled complaints about Indian expenses. Indian gifts, though expensive, were a good bargain for France during their Canadian tenure, when native warriors were the best defense available. But administrative rhetoric, accounting practices, and military pride forced colonial functionaries to constantly defend Indian expenses and repel complaints from Paris. It is reasonable to assume that Gage was under similar pressures from his superiors in Whitehall. Desbarats, "The Costs of Early Canada's Native Alliances: Reality and Scarcity's Rhetoric," *WMQ*, 3rd ser. 52:4 (October 1995): 609-30.

⁹⁷"General Abstract of Provisions Issued to Indians of Different Nations at Fort Chartres," Sep. 14, 1768, Gage Papers AS, vol. 83.

Wilkins made reducing the number of presents dispensed at Illinois his top priority when he took command in September 1768. Upon arriving with his seven companies of the Royal Irish Regiment, he informed George Morgan that his policies would revive the moribund Illinois trade and keep local Indians busy and productive. "The Chief design of my Talk with the Indians has hitherto been and will in the future to encourage them to an Active Life," he told the trader, "And not to encourage Dranes who will stroll from Post to Post as Beggars only ... we want to bring the Trade to this place and I will act as a Father to the Industrious."⁹⁸ Wilkins took over the management of Indian affairs from Edward Cole in the spring of 1769, after the Board of Trade forced the Indian Departments to cease their involvement in trade and to dismiss all commissaries, interpreters, and smiths in the outposts.⁹⁹ Whether or not Wilkins was able to reduce costs enough to please Gage is difficult to know.¹⁰⁰ But Wilkins wanted Gage to have a full picture of his dealings with Indians visiting Fort Chartres, by keeping a detailed Indian journal covering his entire tenure as commandant.¹⁰¹ The journal reveals that, even if the amount of presents diminished, Fort Chartres still hosted frequent and insistent Indian demands for British favors.

Most entries in Wilkins's journal describe visits by Illinois Indian neighbors, but parties of Osages, Missouris, Kickapoos, Potawatomis, and others also arrived in great

⁹⁸Wilkins to Morgan, Oct. 6, 1768, Gage Papers AS, vol. 98.

⁹⁹Gage to Penn, Mar. 24, 1769, *IHC*, 16:516-17.

¹⁰⁰Wilkins frequently stressed his promises to reduce Indian presents, but proof that he was successful is difficult to find. See Dowd, *War Under Heaven*, 537, and Max Savelle, *George Morgan: Colony Builder* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), 51, for claims that Wilkins significantly retrenched Indian expenses. Gage was still impatient about them in 1772, when he ordered Fort Chartres closed. Gage to Johnson, Mar 9, 1772, *WJP*, 8:417-18.

¹⁰¹John Wilkins, Journal of Transactions and Presents Given to Indians from 23d December 1768, Gage Papers AS, vol. 138, folder 20.

numbers. Groups of Michigameas and Kaskaskias, who lived a few miles from the fort, made frequent visits. Kaskaskias visited the forts at least thirteen times during Wilkins's tenure, often accompanied by their influential chief, Tomeroy. Michigameas, whose village was only a mile away, were practically residents of the fort, visiting at least thirty-five separate times and sometimes staying for several days. Peorias and Cahokias were also frequent visitors. Local Indians would always stop by the fort on the way to their hunting grounds or returning from them, to be greeted and rewarded by the British commander. Wilkins almost always gave visitors rum and ammunition and usually clothing as well. Visiting Kaskaskias took away a typical complement of gifts on December 23, 1768: Four pounds of powder, two pounds of lead, a carrot of tobacco, a half-gallon of rum, one breech clout, and one pair of leggings. But Wilkins was just as generous to Indians from far away, even those from the troublesome Wabash region. For example, when Kickapoos visited the post in January 1769, Wilkins gave them the usual complement of goods, plus such extras as a "squaw's lace gown" and a "tinsel laced hat."¹⁰²

Wilkins's Indian journal also shows which local headmen visited the fort most frequently. Tomeroy tops the list, visiting the fort at least thirteen times during the three years of Wilkins's command. Tomeroy's people had determined during the French regime to live near the fort and the trading town of Kaskaskia, making the Kaskaskias dependents of the new British regime. They needed constant updates of information about potential enemies and fully expected help from the fort's garrison in the event of trouble. Tomeroy forged a personal relationship with Wilkins, based on their mutual fears

¹⁰²Ibid., 1-2.

of enemy interlopers and their need to maintain security in the immediate locale.

Tomeroy asked for presents when going to hunt, just as others did, but many of Wilkins's entries reveal the Kaskaskia chief's efforts to scout the area in times of threat. He seems to have been one of Wilkins's main sources of reconnaissance and information, though the commandant always suspected that his information and efforts were exaggerated to obtain more presents. Tomeroy made the fort commandant an important functionary in Kaskaskia ritual life, as when he asked Wilkins to hold a ceremony appointing a new chief. Of course, Wilkins paid for the ceremony too, which entailed hosting the entire Kaskaskia nation.¹⁰³ Wilkins had no choice but to accede to the local chief's "requests" because of the Kaskaskias' proximity and numbers and Tomeroy's great influence in the region. But Wilkins did not trust him. He described Tomeroy as a "great Church going man to the French Church, a great Speaker & I believe like most Savages very deceitful."¹⁰⁴ But deceitful or not, Tomeroy held the upper hand among Indians of the region. Wilkins had no choice but to share his regional authority with the influential chief.

Peoria chief Black Dog also visited the post regularly, as did the Michigamea's Young Chief and One-Eyed Chief. Unlike Tomeroy, who tried to insert himself in the local authority structure and to influence British decisions, Black Dog seemed mainly interested in extracting presents from the beleaguered commandant. He would visit on his way to hunt, and usually tell Wilkins that he had encountered Indian or Spanish troublemakers who wished to turn his people away from the English. Like all recipients of Fort Chartres's largesse, Black Dog knew how to influence Wilkins into rewarding his

¹⁰³Ibid., 21-22.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 52-53.

people. During one unusual visit, he told Wilkins a tear-jerking story about an Indian woman who was to be put to death for marrying against her people's customs. Somehow, six gallons of rum would solve the issue, which Wilkins glumly handed over.¹⁰⁵ But Black Dog commonly told the usual tales of imminent depredations by Kickapoos, Potawatomis, Shawnees, or whichever enemy was rumored to threaten the region at the time. His "thundering reports," were very effective at keeping his people well supplied with provisions and presents, without providing much in return except promises of friendship and alliance. Nearby Michigameas enjoyed a similar relationship. Their headmen, the Young Chief and One-Eyed Chief, visited frequently. Since they lived almost within sight of the fort, they offered some scouting and information in return for their presents. But local Indians did not see this as a *quid pro quo* relationship; they expected presents because of their status as British friends, and received them every time they visited the post.

Fort Chartres was a news outlet as well as a goods store and provisioning center, and local chiefs resorted to Wilkins for information about remote Indian activities. For example, Black Dog visited in February 1769 to discover whether the Wabash would harass his people. Tomeroy and two other Kaskaskia chiefs, Baptiste and Laudeviet, arrived a month later to enquire if Chickasaws would invade the area soon. But news traveled both ways, and all local Indians knew that they would be rewarded for intelligence gained while hunting. On March 22, Indians from all four Illinois nations arrived at the fort, bringing rumors of imminent trouble and wishing to know if the Chickasaws would attack. Wilkins reassured them that the Chickasaws were British allies

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 33-34.

and would not bother the Illinois, and gave them all presents. The visitors grumbled about the reduced quantities of rum, food, and clothing Wilkins was distributing, and “talk’d of former times, & of going to War & much such Stuff,” according to the commandant.¹⁰⁶

Wilkins even helped Michigameas perform death rituals for two of their chiefs killed by Osages. The entire Michigamea nation came to the fort for condolence rites, and Wilkins gave them shelter and provisions. Soon, Peorias and Kaskaskias arrived to add their condolences and to be provisioned. Such congresses of Indian neighbors were common events. Along with their promises of friendship, Indians mustered great numbers to remind Wilkins that they could threaten the fort if they wished. For example, in May 1769, all the Michigamea and Peoria warriors held a congress at the fort. They told Wilkins that unnamed Indians had tried to recruit all four Illinois nations to join a general uprising, but that they had refused. On that instance, so many armed Indians arrived that Wilkins allowed only fifty into the post at a time and put the garrison on parade, just in case. But he still gave the warriors presents and allowed them to have their guns repaired.¹⁰⁷

Indians also brought offers of help and expected to be rewarded for them. Sometimes these were small favors, such as the time Indians brought back a boat that had drifted away in the Mississippi.¹⁰⁸ Indians also offered their expertise as scouts, always accompanied by extra requests for presents. On July 17, 1769, chiefs of the four Illinois nations descended on the fort with rumors that the Senecas and Potawatomis would soon join in a major war against them. They asked Wilkins to visit the Michigamea village to

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 5-6.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 4-11.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 3.

help them prepare for an assault. Wilkins did visit and gave the Michigameas five gallons of rum, "As there is no seeing them without a present." He asked that the Michigameas scout the area for signs of enemies, but by the 26th they had not yet sent out any scouts. They told Wilkins that they could not find anyone willing to reconnoiter the area unless the commandant promised them a feast. Wilkins agreed and forty men scouted the area. They found no Wabash interlopers and hurried back for Wilkins's party on July 31. Though rumors persisted of Potawatomis and Kickapoos hiding in every shrub, the Michigameas and Kaskaskias insisted that the danger had passed and "in very pressing terms desir'd they might be indulg'd to drink & feast on the occasion," Wilkins noted. He gave them ten gallons of rum for their revels because their nations were too "numerous" to refuse it, though he admitted that he was suspicious of their rumors and intelligence.¹⁰⁹

Indians displayed great confidence in visiting the fort. In fact, Wilkins frequently noted that Indians "demanded" presents. This may only mean that they "needed" them, but it is a choice of words that implies Indian social parity, at least, in their meetings with British personnel. For example, he notes that Kaskaskias demanded powder and lead to defend their nation against Pontiac in March 1769. In May of that year, Peoria chiefs and warriors demanded a meeting with Wilkins to discuss how the Indians and British would protect each other. In August, Peorias leaving on a hunting trip "demanded assistance." And in March 1770, Black Dog and other Peorias "demanded Strongly" that they be allowed to move their village next to Fort Chartres.¹¹⁰ Indian demands for British resources continued throughout Wilkins's tenure and he noted few examples where Indians returned the favors. Throughout his journal, whether Wilkins intended this or not,

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 17-21.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 6-7, 11-12, 26-27.

his language implies that native visitors and neighbors held the upper hand in negotiations. They used the fort as a repository of free goods, demanding them as friends, but demanding them still. With much of his garrison perennially stricken with disease, and with military relief hundreds of miles and at least two months away, Wilkins could only agree to such friendly demands.

Indian demands for presents increased with new diplomatic efforts. The days when Cole and Croghan could dole out almost £1,000 in presents in a single day were long gone by 1771, but Wilkins was still willing to be generous with the crown's money in the interests of a profitable Indian policy. In April, a party of thirty Chickasaws, "ornamented and well-appointed," arrived unexpectedly at Fort Chartres. This sent shock waves throughout the immediate region; Kaskaskias raised an alarm in their village, expecting that the long-awaited Chickasaw incursion had finally come. But the Chickasaw delegation wanted only to meet with Illinois chiefs and make peace, though they admitted that they carried no diplomatic mandate to speak for their nation. Wilkins was delighted that the Chickasaws might offer their help to defend Illinois against attacks by increasingly troublesome Wabash Indians. He hoped that the Chickasaws might even be induced to live near Fort Chartres. The delegation stayed for a week, meeting with all local Indians and many of the French *habitants*. Of course, Wilkins gave them many presents, and even a draft for £20 that they could cash in for rum with British traders in their own country. After a week of dancing and feasting, Wilkins had no desire to

introduce even more alcohol into the local social mix.¹¹¹

Wilkins had plenty to worry about by 1771 and the prospect of Chickasaw aid would solve many of his problems. Much of his time was taken up by trade and land disputes involving George Morgan, William Murray, and several French traders.¹¹² Since his arrival in 1768, much of the garrison had been employed shoring up the Mississippi banks to prevent further erosion, so the fort was not in immediate danger. But new rumors of imminent uprisings dominated the early part of the year, and Wilkins once again confined the garrison to the fort.¹¹³ In March, a party of Potawatomis from St. Joseph killed a soldier, who had left the fort to hunt ducks in defiance of Wilkins's restrictions. Fear spread rapidly, and Wilkins worried there might be as many as 500-600 hostile Indians surrounding the fort, though only 12 had been seen.¹¹⁴ Wilkins kept his men penned up in the fort, which did not inspire the garrison's Indian neighbors.

In May, Tomoroy visited Wilkins to warn him that all of the area's Indians were preparing for an invasion, and he asked how the English could help them. Wilkins told the chief not to be afraid and boasted that the Potawatomis would pay dearly for the soldier they had killed. By then, Wilkins had learned a little about the proper use of metaphors. He told Tomoroy that the English "were as numerous as the Trees in the

¹¹¹Ibid., 39-42; Wilkins to Gage, May 11, 1771, Gage Papers AS, vol. 102. No record is available for how much Wilkins spent on the visiting delegation, but Ensign William Connolly, who commanded the small Kaskaskia fort, entertained the delegates for a couple of days and recorded Indian expenses for January to June of just over £194. The Chickasaw visit accounted for much of this amount. "Payment Order of William Connolly," June 28, 1771, Gage Papers AS, vol. 109.

¹¹²For an overview of Wilkins's contentious dealings in Illinois, which eventually involved litigation and disgrace for the commandant, see Savelle, *George Morgan: Colony Builder*, 55-75.

¹¹³Gage to Hillsborough, Jan. 16, 1771 and Mar. 6, 1771, in Carter, *Correspondence*, 289, 292; Croghan to Edmonstone, Feb. 19, 1771, *WJP*, 7:1149.

¹¹⁴Wilkins to Gage, Mar. 26, 1771, Gage Papers AS, vol. 101.

Woods,” and that even if the British could not come in time, their new Chickasaw friends would happily help them destroy the Wabash Indians.¹¹⁵ This pleased Tomoroy, but not Gage when he was told about Wilkins’s Chickasaw threat. He knew that such threats of southern Indian incursions, if spread as rumors, would only confirm the Potawatomis’ and Kickapoos’ worst fears and make the situation even more dangerous. Gage felt that Wilkins should have used his own men to chastise the Indians who killed his soldier, rather than treating with the Chickasaws to do it for him. “You talk of the Party (of Potawatomis) being 5 or 600 Strong. All the Indians of St. Joseph would scarcely amount to Sixty Warriors,” Gage admonished Wilkins.¹¹⁶

Wilkins also continued to defend his record in reducing Indian expenditures. As is well documented in his journal, Indians made regular requests for goods and made it clear that friendship depended upon the giving of gifts. “Every Art is used to Influence me to be more liberal or lavish of the publick money in presents to Indians,” he complained to Gage. He also fretted that his “schemes of Oeconomy” were not being taken seriously. Wilkins argued that his measures had reduced Indian expenses to a twentieth of those at another unnamed post, and he promised to reduce expenditures even more. “Savages are easily Satisfied if properly managed,” he confidently told Gage in June. Wilkins beamed with confidence and felt that he alone had succeeded where other commandants had failed.¹¹⁷

By September Wilkins’s tune had changed. “Several Scalping parties of the Kickapous & Potawatomis being about us, my Garrison very Sickly & hardly a relief for

¹¹⁵Wilkins to Gage, May 11, 1771, Gage Papers AS, vol. 102.

¹¹⁶Gage to Wilkins, Aug. 20, 1771, Gage Papers AS, vol. 105.

¹¹⁷Wilkins to Gage, June 9, 1771, Gage Papers AS, vol. 103.

the Guard, hands wanted to face the Bank & the Necessary Escort in our present Scattar Situation,” he complained, had pushed the Illinois mission to the limit. At the same time, he was fending off complaints from British and French traders and was unable to send any troops into the interior to protect the trade.¹¹⁸ Gage’s patience with the Illinois mission was almost at an end. With new reports that Kickapoos had attacked George Morgan’s plantation, killing two people and kidnapping a trader, the region was practically in a state of uprising. Gage ordered Wilkins to instruct his men in “scouting and wood Fighting,” and to muster friendly Indians to chastise the Potawatomis and Kickapoos.¹¹⁹ But even after six years of British occupation, the downtrodden men of the garrison seemed barely capable of helping themselves, let alone of carrying a war deep into the Illinois interior.

By late 1771, Wilkins’s position had worsened significantly. He spent much of his time fending off complaints and lawsuits by local traders and farmers. Morgan, by this time a staunch enemy of Wilkins, fought with the commandant over a plan to set up a distillery and brewery at Kaskaskia. More and cheaper liquor was the last thing the British garrison needed in the region, but Gage overruled Wilkins’s initial refusal to allow it.¹²⁰ Threats against the British regime from the Illinois interior only increased with time, compounded by the near outbreak of war with Spain in 1770-1771. Disease continued to shake the military foundations of the Illinois government. In May, Fort Chartres seemed sure to be destroyed by the next Mississippi flood, and Gage wrote to

¹¹⁸Wilkins to Gage, Sep. 5, 1771, Gage Papers AS, vol. 106.

¹¹⁹Gage to Johnson, Sep. 24, 1771, *WJP*, 8:278-79.

¹²⁰George Morgan, “Some Reasons Why the Distillation of Spirits from Grain Ought to be Encouraged at the Illinois,” Gage Papers AS, vol. 88; Wilkins to Gage, Feb. 20, 1771, Gage Papers AS, vol. 100; “Proclamation,” Apr. 12, 1771, Gage Papers AS, vol. 102.

ask, sarcastically, if Wilkins might find a new location where disease would not decimate the troops.¹²¹

As a final humiliation for the garrison, the troops were threadbare or not in uniform by the end of 1771. When Wilkins first came to Fort Chartres in 1768, he and his regiment had brought along only one years' worth of clothing. Unfortunately, their replacement clothing ended up in the Ohio River in May 1770, when an inexperienced lieutenant commanding a convoy had to dump his cargo near the Falls of the Ohio.¹²² In September 1771, Wilkins finally requested more replacement uniforms, complaining that many of his men still wore the same clothing they brought with them three years earlier. Others had resorted to buying clothing from local traders, at high Illinois prices. Gage was unsympathetic. He scolded Wilkins for not bringing replacement clothing with him in the first place, and for not requesting more from Fort Pitt after the cargo was lost.¹²³ Sickly, disheveled soldiers in worn out or civilian clothing must have been quite a sight to local and visiting Indians. As for Gage, he had already joined the anti-Illinois chorus. Fort Chartres's future was nearly sealed.

Wilkins tried one last gambit to save the Illinois mission. In May 1771, he formulated a new Illinois plan that would involve destroying Fort Chartres, establishing a civil provincial government, attracting thousands of British settlers to the new province, and reducing Indian expenses to only £500 per annum. Gage had heard such plans before. He rejected everything except the proposal to reduce Indian expenses, which he thought

¹²¹Gage to Wilkins, May 13, 1771, Gage Papers AS, vol. 103.

¹²²Lewis Wynne to Wilkins, May 3, 1771, Gage Papers AS, vol. 92.

¹²³Gage to Wilkins, Sep. 16, 1771, Gage Papers AS, vol. 106.

needed no new form of government to put into action.¹²⁴ Increasing the western flow of settlers would be the worst possible development, according to Gage. "I would be happy for Britain, that there was neither Settler nor Soldier in any part of the Indian Country," he had written to Wilkins earlier. "Indians alone render this Country of the least Benefit to England, who will decrease as White People increase, and then there will be an end to Commerce." The enormous cost of presents made Gage wish the French had never left them any forts or settlements. With the revolutionary spirit of "leveling" growing throughout the eastern colonies, Britain might need every available troop and shilling to maintain its North American holdings.¹²⁵ Illinois had not enriched Britain, and resentment against the British occupation had only caused the effects of the 1763 Indian uprising to linger on in Illinois and the Wabash country. With new reports at the end of 1771 that Wabash, Miami, and Potawatomi groups would fall on Fort Chartres in the spring and cut off the Ohio River supply line, Gage finally reached the breaking point. Only a new punitive expedition could reduce the hostilities and chastise belligerent Indians, and a costly Indian war was exactly what Gage and Johnson could not have.¹²⁶

In September 1771, Gage ordered Major Isaac Hamilton to take over command of the Illinois from Wilkins and to form a force to chastise the Wabash Indians. Hamilton and his men arrived at Fort Pitt too late in the year to set out on the Ohio. When they finally embarked in February 1772, Fort Chartres's fate had already been sealed in London. Weary of the ridiculously high expenses at the fort, "which has proved to be of

¹²⁴Gage to Wilkins, Aug. 21, 1771, Gage Papers AS, vol. 105.

¹²⁵Gage to Wilkins, Aug. 27, 1770, Gage Papers AS, vol. 95; Gage to Wilkins, Dec. 2, 1770, Gage Papers AS, vol. 98.

¹²⁶Gage to Johnson, Dec. 11, 1771, *WJP*, 8:343; Johnson to Gage, Dec. 23, 1771, *WJP*, 8:348.

so little Use or Benefit to the Publick,” according to Gage, Whitehall had pulled its support for the entire mission. The fort’s regulars were needed in the East to garrison Boston and manage increasingly unruly colonists. Fort Chartres would be razed as cheaply as possible; preferably by assisting “the Torrents of the River” by ceasing to reinforce the banks. British settlers were to be evacuated from Vincennes and all interior posts. All interpreters, smiths, surgeons, and artillerymen would be ordered out of Illinois. A small, temporary post would be established at Kaskaskia to guard British trade interests there. And Indian presents would be sent only as needed; no more bills from traders would be approved. Johnson worried about how the Illinois Indians would interpret such a precipitous withdrawal of troops, but he hoped that he could handle it with more diplomacy, and a few well-placed gifts.¹²⁷

Many factors contributed to Fort Chartres’s failure to establish British mastery over the Illinois country. Its commandants were corrupt and combative. The region was simply too far from supply centers to be affordably supported. The mission always faced opposition, both from governmental figures who did not want the great expense, and from provincial supporters of a civil government and colony in Illinois. But the impression left by the sources is that the British occupation always foundered, even during the rare times when it was adequately supported. Gage frequently noted his disapproval of the post’s inability to manage the local Indians, except through lavish use of presents. But this inability came honestly to the post’s beleaguered garrison.

¹²⁷Gage to Wilkins, Sep. 20, 1771, Gage Papers AS, vol. 106; Gage to Hamilton, Sep. 20, 1771, Gage Papers AS, vol. 106; Hamilton to Gage, Nov. 18, 1771, Gage Papers AS, vol. 107; Gage to Hamilton, Feb. 24, 1772, Gage Papers AS, vol. 109; Edmonstone to Gage, Mar. 1, 1772, vol. 109; Gage to Johnson, Mar 9, 1772, *WJP*, 8:417-18; Gage to Wilkins, Mar. 9, 1771, Gage Papers AS, vol. 109; Johnson to Gage, Sep. 2, 1772, *WJP*, 8:588.

Undermanned, insufficiently funded, laid low by disease, and surrounded by unimpressed Indians and resentful *habitants*, the post could never hope to impress Indians enough to make the Illinois into a profitable operation for Britain. It could have been worse for everyone involved. Had Gage not aborted the British mission and abandoned Fort Chartres, the long-rumored prospect of a new Indian uprising might have become a reality. Instead, the status quo of small-scale British-Indian conflict continued into the Revolutionary period, when George Rogers Clark and the American independence movement imposed a new, destructive identity on the contest for political and cultural control of Illinois and the Wabash.¹²⁸

Indian impressions and British appearances figured prominently in the story of Fort Chartres. The British attempt to garrison Fort Chartres was an abject failure by any measure. But more important than its failure to survive and establish physical and political control was its inability to impose the *idea* of British mastery on the Illinois

¹²⁸The exploits of Clark and his band of Kentucky volunteers during the American Revolution, which included their taking of Kaskaskia and Cahokia and victory over Henry Hamilton's forces at Vincennes, have long been the stuff of American heroic myth. As a backcountry "Indian fighter" who overcame a much larger British force with a small band of volunteers, he has been seen as an epitome of American republican virtues who "won the West." Clark stirred up French and Indian anti-British animosities in Illinois more than anyone since Pontiac and Kaské, and attracted a full-scale British invasion of the Wabash country for the first time. His military achievements were ultimately of little note: he could not control Illinois or challenge Detroit as he had hoped. But his subsequent battles with British-allied Iroquois, Shawnees, and Miamis in the Ohio Valley sparked an American-Indian war that did not abate until the 1790s. Because of his virulent hatred of Indians and questionable record as a military leader, recent scholars have avoided him and his operations in treatments of the Revolutionary War. Such biographies that have appeared in recent decades have sought to reify his heroic image, as in Lowell H. Harrison, *George Rogers Clark and the War in the West* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1976). For a more nuanced approach to the violent events in the Illinois and Wabash country in the years after the fall of Fort Chartres, see White, *The Middle Ground*, 368-78. For a traditional "heroic" biography, see John Edwin Bakeless, *Background to Glory: The Life of George Rogers Clark* (Philadelphia: Lipincott, 1957).

Indian population. Without proper resources, the fort's personnel could never hope to project images of strength, manliness, and mastery upon their native audience. From the earliest British attempts to send agents into Illinois, the region's Indians proved that they could easily confront British representatives in ways other Indian groups could not. When they wished, they could attack convoys, harass traders, plunder storehouses, and kill livestock. In essence, they could carry on an uprising against British rule without worrying about the consequences. Indians, both friendly and hostile, would wait in vain for the British garrison in Illinois to avenge these affronts with violent chastisement. Fort Chartres's men could not hope to carry out a punitive war. They could only respond to threats of violence with harsh words and threats, accompanied by presents.

Even Illinois Indian allies, who had thrown their lots in with the new British regime, understood their dominant position and demanded frequent and extravagant presents in return for their friendship. Sick, threadbare, and exhausted, Fort Chartres's garrison finally left Illinois to the Indians, at least for a while. No sense of inevitability, no invisible, deterministic historical or economic forces, could have convinced Illinois's Indian populations that Europeans were capable of overcoming native hegemony in the region. In the confrontation of cultures in North America, natives had overcome newcomers in the cultural battle of Fort Chartres. As predicted by Hananaa, stars had fallen from the firmament, and hurt nobody.

CONCLUSION

CANAJOHARIE: THE MOHAWKS' NEW WORLD

Poulous could not understand why a man he barely knew had taken his rum. The Mohawk had lived for years in the small British fort adjacent to his village of Canajoharie and kept a "Cagg of Rum" there for his own use. In March 1756 his peaceful life took an unexpected turn. A British officer and twenty-five regular soldiers arrived to garrison the fort, named for the famous Mohawk sachem "King" Hendrick. After months of insulting the Canajoharie Mohawks, the garrison went even further. In September, the new men proceeded to bar Poulous from his own home, not to mention his rum. Ironically, Fort Hendrick had been built at the Mohawks' request several years earlier and recently renovated. Now it was demonstrating the extent to which Mohawks had left the in-between world of forts and villages and joined the new colonial world of their longtime British allies.

Canajoharie, the Mohawk River "Upper Castle," had been a Mohawk population center since early in the eighteenth century. The village was surrounded by a light stockade and probably contained 20-30 houses and some 200 inhabitants by the 1740s. Canajoharie Indians enjoyed convenient access to Fort Oswego on Lake Ontario and William Johnson's home at Fort Johnson. They also maintained a longstanding and firm alliance to British interests. Since early in the century, Mohawks at Canajoharie had received British missionaries and teachers in their village, and by the 1740s almost all of

them had converted to Christianity.¹ Johnson was considered a kinsman by the Mohawks, and he would later take Molly Brant, an influential Canajoharie Mohawk of the Wolf Clan, as his common-law wife. So when the British and French brought warfare into the Mohawks' country, the natives felt it was only fair that the British build them a protective fort at Canajoharie.

The first requests for a fort at the Upper Castle came during King George's War in 1747. George Clinton ordered Johnson to build a small fort "without blockhouses" at the Mohawk village, which cost New York £49. The fort must not have been very hardy. When the Seven Years' War broke out six years later, the Mohawks again requested forts at their castles for their families' protection. New York's governor again agreed to this reasonable request; £500 was a small price to pay for the allegiance of the Mohawks and their powerful Six Nations allies. But this time a fort was not enough. The Canajoharies wanted a substantial garrison at the fort to protect their town and their families. They probably desired status equal to the Mohawks of the Lower Castle of Tiononderoge, who had a fort (Fort Hunter, built in 1710) and a significant garrison. Johnson sent an officer and twenty-five men to the Canajoharie fort in March 1756.²

Then the complaints began. Mohawk headmen began to fret that the regulars of the new garrison were acting as if the Mohawk fort was not a proper place for Indians. British affronts began almost immediately. A delegation of Canajoharie headmen complained to Johnson that they were not satisfied with the "Red Coats," and wanted

¹William N. Fenton and Elisabeth Tooker, "Mohawk," in Trigger, *Handbook*, 474.

²Clinton to Johnson, July 2, 1747, *WJP*, 1:103-04; Johnson to Clinton, July 28, 1748, *WJP* 9:30; James De Lancey to Johnson, May 3, 1755, *WJP*, 1:484-85; Johnson to De Lancey, Aug. 1755, *WJP* 1:842; Johnson to Shirley, Apr. 1756, *WJP*, 9:416.

them replaced with local men who understood their ways. Johnson knew that the Mohawks' friendship with Britain was staunch, and immediately wrote to commander-in-chief Loudoun for reinforcements. But Johnson was suspicious of some of the local settlers and recommended that the men be hired from Albany or Schenectady rather than the immediate area of Canajoharie. He also asked Loudoun to order his officers not to give or sell the Mohawks any rum and to avoid the Indians whenever they could. Loudoun issued the orders, but the garrison took them too far.³

When Poulous left his house one day in late summer, the new commandant confiscated his keg of rum and took it to his own apartment. He posted sentries and ordered them to shoot any Indian who came into the fort looking for the rum. When Poulous returned and found his keg missing, he walked right past the very sensible sentries into the officer's house and took back his property. The commandant was livid upon returning and finding the rum gone. "Did I Nott order you to Shute any Indian that should Come of itt?" he railed at a sentry. "I see No Indian you have Shott." He confined the sentries and whipped one of them severely. When four Mohawk headmen went to the fort to complain about Poulous's treatment, they gave the officer a way to compensate for the insult. The Mohawks noted that the officer's "fatt Catle" had been foraging in their plantations and that Warroghioggy (Johnson) would surely want the garrison to compensate them for the loss. The officer told them to complain all they wished to Johnson. The fort belonged to the king, the officer told the shocked Mohawks, and he answered to the king, not to Johnson.

³Johnson to Shirley, May 26, 1756, *WJP*, 9:461.

When the four sachems complained to Johnson, they were polite but firm. They made it very clear that the Canajoharies wanted a dependable garrison made up of local "Country People" who understood Indian ways and would respect them. The "Red Coats" and their officer must be sent away before conflict ensued. "He has Slept hear as we May Say butt One Night and we are Afread if he Sleeps hear a Second Night we Shall all be Distroyd," warned the sachems.⁴

The army had bigger worries in 1756, and the regulars stayed in Fort Hendrick. Mohawk complaints continued into the following year. Mohawk sachem Nickas claimed that the soldiers would not let the Indians into the fort at all, saying it was the king's property and the Mohawks had "nothing to do with it." Men of the garrison also warned that if the French attacked, the Indians would not be allowed inside, although the fort was built for their protection. This confused and enraged Nickas. "It is on our Land & built with our Timber," he protested to Johnson, "Therefore we have a right to it, at least to protection in time of danger, but they tell us not." Nickas issued an ultimatum: either Johnson withdraw the garrison or the Mohawks would not send their warriors to help the British in their war. Johnson denied the charges and promised that the king had no designs on their land. He offered to withdraw the men if the Mohawks insisted, but he advised against it. Johnson then berated them for issuing such an unfriendly ultimatum and warned that such tactics could endanger their friendship and alliance. The men remained at Fort Hendrick. Johnson wrote off the complaints to Indian drinking and the rabble-rousing of local Dutch settlers who possessed long ties to the Mohawks and resented the presence of British troops in the region. Nickas later complained that Fort

⁴"Complaint of the Canajoharie Indians," Sep. 27, 1756, *WJP*, 9:546-48.

Hendrick's soldiers were cutting trees on Indian land without first offering Mohawks the opportunity to supply them with fuel for payment. Instead of answering the complaint, Johnson sent an advertisement to be posted in the area offering a £20 reward for information about any "evil low designing People among the Inhabitants" who might be stirring up the Indians against the garrison.⁵

Fort Hendrick had started out as a temporary measure designed to protect Iroquois lives and property. By the 1760s it reflected the new Indian-British world that Canajoharie had become. In 1761 the fort had lapsed into disuse and the Canajoharies had moved toward a more Anglicized existence. Johnson sent them a new schoolteacher in March. Mohawk headmen asked if Johnson might let them use one of the fort's blockhouses as a school, but reconsidered when they found out local settlers were already using it as a stable. Fort Hendrick finally disappeared in 1768 when local farmers pulled it down to reuse the materials. Its last mention in Johnson's papers are a Mohawk request that the land be cleared so that they could build a Christian church.⁶

This small episode in Canajoharie's evolution as an Indian-British place reveals many of the themes and problems that occupied the lives of Indians who lived near forts. The fort was built at the behest of the Iroquois, but outside considerations created a confusing and maddening situation for the Indians who occupied the liminal world of Cananjoaharie-Hendrick. As in other places, Indian leaders sought to mediate the authority of the commanders of such posts, but with less success than at the five forts examined in this study.

⁵"An Indian Conference," Feb. 7, 1757, *WJP*, 9:600-01; Archibald McAulay to Johnson, Dec. 2, 1758, *WJP* 10:56; "An Advertisement," *WJP*, 10:63.

⁶"Journal of Indian Affairs," *WJP*, 10:219, 228; Johnson to Gage, July 20, 1768, *WJP*, 12:555.

Trade, presents, and respect for native customs mattered just as much to the Canajoharie Mohawks as it did to other Indians throughout eastern America. But the Mohawks faced a problem that those other Indian groups did not: Britain took them for granted. Britain needed the Mohawks' military help during the Seven Years' War and again during the Revolutionary War, but during times of peace they needed only their docility. Mohawks no longer commanded their country the way Illinois and Cherokee Indians controlled their regions. They could not use their knowledge of foodways to make themselves useful the way Ottawas and Ojibwas did at Michilimackinac. As longstanding allies of Britain whose numbers decreased every year, they could not wield violence and diplomacy with the same vigor that their Seneca brethren used at Niagara. And without much to offer their British allies except their friendship, they could do little to address the dearth of hospitality shown them at Fort Hendrick. Canajoharie Mohawks evinced just as much influence and agency as other native groups who had requested British forts to protect their homes. But instead of revealing the unsettled nature of the contest for cultural domination of Indian country, as had happened in many places throughout North America, Canajoharie's experience in fort-building only laid bare the extent to which they had already moved into a state of European social and cultural domination. By attaching themselves firmly to British culture, the Mohawks had joined the European club. The dynamic social and cultural interplay that dominated other fort-Indian sites in the continent no longer provided the advantages to the Mohawks that Indians enjoyed near other forts.

Canajoharie is a reminder that native cultural and demographic loss is a common end to stories of Indians and British forts. While Indians may have employed substantial

adeptness in affecting and reordering British military imperatives in Indian country, their futures held depressingly consistent scenarios of dispossession and poverty. The Canajoharies actually did better than most Indian groups that interacted with forts. As New York citizens, they were able to live with relative economic success. But even as they sought to assimilate themselves into the British colonial world, the Mohawks continued unsuccessfully to search for coexistence strategies to help them maintain their lands and ways in the midst of ever-increasing numbers of European settlers. It was not poverty or disease that caused them to leave Canajoharie; rather, it was their strong and effective roles as British loyalists during the Revolution that caused their eventual migration to Canada.

Indians' fort experiences do not reveal a historical landscape where Indians ended up as winners. But forts did not introduce devastation to Indian country or greatly contribute to native loss. Instead they implanted opportunities for new coexistence and resistance strategies that Indians used effectively to maintain as much of their traditional ways as possible for as long as they could. In this sense, most Indians who interacted with British fort communities resisted the European invasion, using mixtures of accommodation, intimidation, cooperation, and occasional violence. Such efforts may lack the drama of more confrontational resistance movements, such as those led by Pontiac and Tecumseh. But Indians should not be criticized for trying to find reasonable methods of coexistence and cooperation just because their efforts do not satisfy modern desires for heroic narratives. If Indians were eventually dispossessed of their lands and cultures, it is the fault of the invaders, not the invaded.

Finally, the Canajoharie episode stands out because of Nickas's bold statement of Indian proprietorship. He pointed out to Johnson directly what other Indians must have said to fort commandants throughout the continent. Whether constructed by Dutch, French, Spanish, or British newcomers, forts were built on Indian land with the natural materials natives had used for generations. Forts were Indian objects in that respect, just as if they were canoes or shelters. But by the mid-1700s, Indians in eastern North America understood European notions of reciprocal exchange and merged them with their own traditions. If forts were to occupy their country then some consideration must be made for the social and cultural changes they brought with them. So the back-and-forth process of diplomacy, presents, intimidation, and politeness emerged whenever forts sprang up in the backcountry, reducing the invasion of America to small, local exchanges in remote forests and plains. The closer one looks at the experiences of people living in these remote arenas, the more it becomes clear that British military outposts and fort personnel were not usually the agents of continental change imagined in subsequent American fiction and mythology. In retrospect, it might be more fruitful to reflect on how experiences with Indians changed the occupiers, many of whom later became traders and took native wives.

Forts implanted new worlds in Indian country. In these worlds, where liminal fort cultures made creative cultural negotiations an everyday activity, both Indians and Europeans could separate themselves partially from their cultural imperatives and sometimes find new paths to cooperation. But forts were not isolated from outside demands and responsibilities, either for Europeans or Indians. Competing meanings and levels of social power dominated these negotiations. Each side sought advantages as

much as they did cooperation and safety. This made the worlds of backcountry forts dangerous as well as complex. In every case, Indians acted as full participants in ordering life and deciding outcomes in these contact points.

The traditional view of British outposts bristling with bayonets as places of military refuge is deserved; both settlers and Indians sought their protection in times of trouble. But cultural refuge was harder to come by for British fort personnel. To live in Indian country one had to meet Indians on their own terms to some degree. For Old Hop, Matchekewis, Teedyuscung, and thousands of others who chose to absorb forts into their cultural orbits, officers and garrisons were their best chance at affecting or controlling the terms of the invasion of their countries. That the British culture behind the forts eventually came to dominate Indian country should not diminish the efforts of Indians to decide their own fates in the shadows of the newcomers' bulwarks and palisades.

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